MARVIN'S LETTERS

TO THE

"MORNING POST."

WRITTEN DURING THE YEARS 1888-90

BEING A SERIES OF SPECIAL ARTICLES

BY THE LATE

MR. CHARLES MARVIN,

CONTRIBUTED TO AND SOLELY PUBLISHED IN THE "MORNING POST," ALLAHABAD, INDIA.



Edited by LOUIS TRACY.



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"MORNING POST,"

IN FIVE PARTS.

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ERRATA.

At Page	343,	line	10	from	bottom,	for	"Oases,"	read	Oasis.
"	353,	"	7	"	top,	"	"as"	"	of.
"	368,	"	25	"	"	"	"clarly"	"	clearly.
"	365,	"	21	"	"	"	"Russian"	"	Russia.
"	381,	"	13	"	"	"	"Noble"	"	Nebol.
"	383,	"	1	"	"	"	"Turkmenia"	"	Turkomania.
"	384,	"	14	"	"	"	"who"	"	we.
"	385,	"	2	"	"	"	"The"	"	The.
"	387,	"	8	"	"	"	"tremendons"	"	tremendous.
"	388,	"	11	"	"	"	"Milenall"	"	Mitchell.
"	388,	"	2	"	bottom	"	"simly"	"	simply.
"	391,	"	5	"	top	"	"were"	"	where.
"	393,	"	23	"	bottom	"	"of"	"	off.
"	394,	"	13	"	"	"	"wile"	"	wild.
"	394,	"	6	"	"	"	"were"	"	where.
"	394,	"	6	"	"	"	"fuel hardly"	"	fuel was hardly.
"	395,	"	14	"	top	"	"appointed commission."	"	appointed a commission.
"	397,	"	15	"	"	"	"stops"	"	stop.
"	397,	"	22	"	bottom	"	"orsible"	"	crrible.
"	398,	"	12	"	"	"	"crises"	"	crises.
"	404,	"	23	"	top	"	"had encounter"	"	had to encounter.
"	410,	"	3	"	bottom	"	"ports"	"	parts.
"	413,	"	1	"	top	"	"If to be"	"	If it is.
"	413,	"	2	"	bottom	"	"No other"	"	Any other.
"	414,	"	16	"	top	"	"Extoration"	"	Exploration.
"	423,	"	10	"	bottom	"	"be"	"	be.

PREFACE.

Sound opinions, accurate judgment, and complete information on every topic dealt with, so distinguish Charles Marvin's writings from those of the host of his contemporaries that it is only doing a public service to rescue from their ephemeral resting place in the columns of a daily newspaper the letters which constitute the present volume. It is true that at the time of publication in the *Morning Post* Marvin's weekly contributions were eagerly looked for and widely read. But not many among the million have the time or inclination to gather and collate for personal use materials published at intervals and in disconnected form. Those therefore who read the letters when they originally appeared will welcome their re-issue, whilst the work will be of great value to succeeding generations of statesmen, political students and writers, who can readily learn Marvin's views on the important and diverse subjects touched upon—some at considerable length—embodying as they do the reflections *de die in diem* of one who was acknowledged, by those qualified to judge, to be the greatest authority of his time on Central Asian and Russian affairs.

For convenience, the book is divided into five parts, and, so far as is possible without interfering with the context or needlessly mutilating each separate communication, the classification is strictly followed. The actual chronological sequence of the letters is thus unavoidably discarded, but it is carefully adhered to in the divisional arrangement, and whenever a portion of an article is transferred to a section other than that in which the major part appears the date is prefixed. Owing to the versatility of Marvin's pen and to the numerous questions with which he

was so competent to deal, it was found impossible to do more than classify his letters in a broad and generic manner. The book has been carefully indexed, affording ready reference to all passages relating to particular persons, places or events. The biographical sketch, insufficient though it may well be deemed, supplies at least the salient details of Marvin's remarkable and all too short career. An attempt is also made in the concluding article, reproduced by kind permission of the publishers of the *Calcutta Review*, to diagnose his place among contemporary writers on Central Asia and Russia, and to allot to him some at least of the honour so grudgingly bestowed during his life-time for the great and lasting services he rendered to England and to Englishmen.

THE EDITOR.

Allahabad, September, 1891.



BIOGRAPHY OF CHARLES MARVIN.

CHARLES MARVIN.

BIOGRAPHICAL PARTICULARS

CHARLES MARVIN was born at Plumstead, June 10th, 1854. His father was a marine engineer employed in Woolwich Dockyard. In 1869, when the dockyard was on the point of being closed, Mr. Scott Russell, the eminent engineer, made enquiries at the Admiralty for some one to go out to Russia to become assistant to his son, then manager of Baird's Engineering Works at St. Petersburg. Mr. Marvin was recommended and went out alone. The following year he was joined by his family, and in this manner Charles Marvin, then sixteen, first made his acquaintance with Russia.

Baird's Works occupy the greater portion of an island at the mouth of the river Neva. An English colony, of foremen, etc., engaged at the establishment, occupied the pleasantest part of the island Several thousand workmen were employed in manufacturing marine engines for men-of-war, gun carriages for the forts at Cronstadt and elsewhere, and brass cartridges for the army. At Baird's, were turned out the engines of the famous ironclad *Peter the Great*, and the circular ironclads or Popoffkas, twenty or thirty torpedo boats employed on the Danube, and a variety of river craft for the Neva and Volga. The Grand Duke Constantine, Admiral Popoff and naval officers of various grades were continually at the works, and Charles Marvin's father was constantly at the Admiralty. During the fifteen years' stay of Mr. Marvin *pére* at Baird's—of which for a period he was manager—Charles Marvin had every opportunity of gaining an insight into the Russian navy. Whatever objections the Russians might have now, they did not mind then, a boy of sixteen roaming about the forts of Cronstadt while the workmen from Baird's were fitting up the gun carriages, and the officers were pleased to show one so inquisitive, all that was interesting in the Russian defences, as well on shore as afloat.

The first six months were spent in "picking up the language" and roaming about St. Petersburg, until Charles Marvin got to know every nook and corner of it so well that old residents did not hesitate to use him as guide. It was during this period that he acquired a love of St. Petersburg that never deserted him. "I look upon it as a second home," he says. "It is always a pleasure to pay it a visit, and mix again with my many Russian friends."

In Russia it is the custom, where there is only one boy in the family, to adopt another as companion, and not infrequently one of foreign extraction is chosen. Early in the spring succeeding Charles Marvin's arrival in Russia, a proposal was made that he should become for a few years, the companion of the son of a colonel of the Imperial Cuirassier Guards, who was also the head of the bodyguard of the Empress. A Russian professor, together with other teachers, was to give instruction to both, and in return Marvin was to talk English to his companion. Besides having his education extended, he was to be well supplied with pocket money to share the pleasures of the family. The proposal was accepted, and immediately afterwards he set out with the family for Tamboff, where the colonel had extensive estates and a large stud of horses—the colonel furnishing remounts for the regiment to which he belonged. For several years Marvin led what he calls the "life of a lap-dog." "Whether living at St. Petersburg, or on the Tamboff estates, or travelling about the country, nothing was allowed to interfere with our enjoyment, and everything was done to make me forget that I was not a born Russian nor an actual member of the family." Colonel Volykoff was the lucky possessor of a cook who would have made any London club famous. While a serf, he had been sent successively to France, Germany, Austria and Italy, to become a thorough European master of the culinary art, and could turn out 365 different dinners every year, in a manner that was the envy of other Russian aristocratic households. "Vasilli is an old man now, but whenever I go to Russia he is never happy until I have partaken, to an outrageous extent, of the hospitality of his kind master." The Volykoffs belonged to an old noble family that has furnished many a famous name to Russian military annals, and the principal friends of the colonel were naturally military men. In this manner, for a considerable period, Marvin was thrown as much among military men as he was among naval men at Baird's. No other writer has thus had such opportunities of becoming acquainted with the character and sentiments of the Russian administration. Schuyler went to Russia as consul, and saw only the outside of Russian official life. Even Sir Donald Wallace lived only for a short time among some Russians as a foreign friend. In the case of Marvin he was for years the adopted child, so to say, of a Russian family, living their family life, sharing their joys and sorrows, and enjoying every opportunity of acquiring the sentiments of the Russian army in regard to England and India. The kindness he experienced during this period made an impression that time failed to efface. Whenever he considered Russia right, he always declared her innocence, and advocated its recognition by England, and over and over again in his works he said that if he were not an Englishman he would gladly be a Russian,

so much did he admire the people and believe in the great destiny awaiting their empire. He shared to the fullest their hatred of the Germans, and was an enemy to all projects for aggrandising Germany at the expense of Russia. Living the life of a lap-dog was pleasant, but did not open up the career Charles Marvin was bent on—journalism and literature. In 1874 he sent an occasional letter or two to the *Echo*, but dropped the connection for a fortnightly letter to the *Globe*. The following year, finding the snow-glare accompanying Russian winters seriously affecting his eyes he decided upon returning to England. Before doing so, he took one more journey across Russia to the Ural mountains, and spent the summer in the Southern Ural districts, Orenburg and the Kirghiz steppes.

Marvin arrived in London in October 1875, with the aim of devoting himself entirely to journalism and literature. The moment selected was not a very favourable one. The Russians were doing nobly in Central Asia, and their policy in Europe attracted little interest. The newspapers, therefore, did not care for contributions about Russia, and at the end of six months he found himself with a box full of rejected articles, a diminishing purse, and no headway whatever made in journalism. Like most journalists he was unconsciously serving that apprenticeship essential to success in newspaper matters. Much writing is needed to make a man master of his pen.

"Literature is a very good walking stick, but a very bad crutch." Having no private fortune, it was essential to replenish his almost exhausted purse somehow. At this juncture some one suggested to him to do temporary work as a Government copyist at 10 pence an hour. The work, he was assured, was light; some copyists made £2 or £3 a week, and while unlike other non-literary pursuits, it would not exhaust him and leave him unfit for journalism at night; it would enable him to get an insight into the inner life of the public departments—knowledge that might afterwards prove useful to him. So Marvin attended the next examination, passed it, and was at once appointed to the Custom House, where he spent six months preparing the annual revenue statistics for Parliament. From here he was removed to the Post Office, serving in several of the departments there; then to Somerset House, where he acted as registrar of unlicensed dog prosecutions. This was his easiest place—his attendance not being required until half-past 10, and permission being given him to leave at 3 in the afternoon on most days; thereby giving him plenty of time for a work on which he was engaged—*The Empire of the English*. After a few months, however, a reorganization swept the copyists out of Somerest House, and he was sent back to the Custom House. By this

time the revolt in Bulgaria had commenced, and public interest in Russia caused a demand for Russian contributions. Soon Marvin was so busy that he resigned his position at the Custom House, and while, for prudential reasons, he did not have his name removed from the register of the Civil Service Commission, he requested the authorities to pass him over in favour of other copyists for the present. A few months later, however, a special offer was made to him of an appointment as copyist at the Foreign Office. Only one copyist was appointed at that department; he was informed the hours were from 12 to 6, which left his mornings free, and the work was so light that sometimes the copyist had nothing to do for weeks together. Recognising that the appointment would give him a unique opportunity of studying the method of conducting foreign affairs—a knowledge possessed by no writer in the Press, Marvin at once accepted the offer and took up his duties in the Treaty Department. Here his work consisted in copying treaties, preparing letters of introduction to embassies abroad, writing out, for the Queen's signature, Her Majesty's letters to foreign potentates, and other similar correspondence. Many of the letters were in French and German, and had to be translated as well as copied. Extra pay for the latter increased the official wage of ten pence an hour from 30s. to £2 or £2-10 a week. At the same time he was making £10 or £15 a week by his articles on Russia, &c., in the London newspapers.

Nearly six months passed. Marvin had learnt nearly all that he could learn in regard to the administration of the Foreign Office and had become connected with so many newspapers that he decided to resign the copyist's position again. Only one newspaper knew of his connection with the Foreign Office—the *Globe*—and beyond recording for it the visits of the ambassadors (an item of news that paid for his dinner every day), he had made no attempt to "exploit" his position in the least. However, the very week he had timed as the last he would remain at the Foreign Office an event occurred which subsequently provoked a world-wide sensation.

Returning to the Treaty Department after lunch one day in May 1878 he found the two officials hard at work on a document which they informed him was a compromise arrived at between England and Russia in regard to events in Turkey. The document was a printed one, "printed for use of the Cabinet only." It consisted of two agreements, printed on separate sheets of foolscap. Mr. March, the head official, was copying one; Mr. Irving, his assistant, another. The written copy was to be in duplicate—on treaty paper: both to be signed by Schouvaloff and Salisbury; one being sent to Russia and one kept at the Foreign Office. Schouvaloff

was impatiently waiting to sign the agreement and send his copy off to Russia by the night's mail.

To hurry matters Marvin was asked to copy the shorter agreement in duplicate, and when he had finished he assisted Mr. March in comparing his copy with the original. In this manner he became aware of the contents of the documents, to which however no secrecy was attached, as it was understood that Salisbury was to go down to the House and make a statement that night, while the full text was to be sent to the *Times* as a reward for supporting the Government.

If the *Times* was to publish the full text in the morning, why not the *Globe* a summary overnight? In the full belief that Lord Salisbury had gone down to the House to make a statement which he thought he might anticipate by half an hour or an hour, Marvin proceeded to the *Globe* office, and wrote out a summary of the agreement. This was issued in an "extra special." The common impression that Marvin "Stokes'd" the "agreement," and wrote out the whole document from memory is an error. He simply furnished a summary. "The *Globe*," he says, "had done me many good turns, and I gave it the summary from a desire to do it a good turn before leaving the Foreign Office. If Lord Salisbury had the right to give the full text to the *Times* the next morning, I felt there could be no very great public wrong done in letting the *Globe* have a summary overnight." But the next morning, to Marvin's consternation, the *Times* published no full text, and no statement had been uttered in the House. The Conservative Press also denounced the summary as a *canard*, and declared England could never have made such concession to Russia. Strangely enough the clerks assembled at the Foreign Office without having seen the disclosure in the *Globe*, and it was not until after luncheon hour that an agitation spread through the place. Lord Salisbury and Count Schouvaloff had violently quarrelled, each accusing the other of having disclosed the news; while Downing Street resounded with the rattle of carriages containing diplomatists hastening to ascertain if the information was correct.

Then followed Salisbury's denial that any secret treaty had been signed, and the public reviled the *Globe* as a disseminator of false news. An appeal was made to Marvin to put things right. Anxious to remove the reproach from the *Globe*, he thought of resigning his post and then making a statutory declaration as to what had occurred. It was feared, however, that Lord Salisbury would persist in his denial. The surest way was to publish the full text. But there were only two copies in existence—one had gone to Russia and Lord Salisbury had the other. It might be a

matter of months before a copy of the full text could be obtained, but Marvin swore he would never leave the Foreign Office till he had got it, and retrieved the reputation of the *Globe*. Meanwhile, he supported what had appeared in the *Globe* by articles and paragraphs in other newspapers. Among them was the *Morning Advertiser*, to which he had been contributing for more than a year. The paper was a Conservative one, and had taken a false line in declaring that no Conservative Government would ever be so cowardly as to surrender Kars and Batoum. Marvin wrote to the editor, Captain Hamber, a letter marked "private and confidential," informing him that the surrender really had been made, and described the document in an article which Hamber inserted as, "From our St Petersburg correspondent." This letter Captain Hamber published, and changed the tone of his leaders.

A fortnight later the Berlin Congress assembled. One evening Marvin appeared at the *Globe* office with a packet, and handing it to the sub-editor exclaimed "The reputation of the *Globe* is retrieved ; here is the Full Text." The treaty was in French. Marvin took it home and made a translation of it, and the next morning corrected both before they appeared in the paper. Then he went down to the Foreign Office to await the hurricane that would blow that afternoon. In an hour's time every M. P. was scanning the sensational three columns in the *Globe*, and Lord Iddesleigh, confused and faltering, was confessing that the Full Text represented what had been actually signed by Salisbury and Schouvaloff. Who had had the audacity to publish the Treaty he could not tell. The whole afternoon the Foreign Office was in a state of agitation and distress, and for a week afterwards the disclosure was the chief topic of the Press, every possible surmise being hazarded as to how the Full Text came to appear in print.

In all probability the secret would have been as well kept as the secret of the "Cabul Correspondence" subsequently published in the *Standard*, but for a rare instance of editorial faithlessness. The sensation at the disclosure was just beginning to subside when the sub-editor of the *Globe* conveyed a message to Marvin to meet him on the Thames Embankment, and on his arrival bade him prepare for the arrest, as Captain Hamber, the editor of the *Morning Advertiser*, was going to play the part of a common informer and send his letter, although marked " private and confidential," to the Government—in fact he had already done so, and the letter was subsequently produced at Bow Street. To Marvin it seemed almost incredible that an officer and a gentleman should be guilty of such an act, but the warning was not one to be disregarded, and proceeding home he prepared for the worst by packing up his private

papers and sending them away to a safe place. Within an hour of this being done the detectives were already watching his house, and maintained a supervision of his movements until a week later, when he was placed under arrest.

Meanwhile, nothing had been said at the Foreign Office, and it was not until the case came on at Bow Street that Marvin learnt that he was charged with appropriating a copy of a document that was not missing. The prosecution collapsed at once, when this was proved to be the case— Mr. Vaughan, the magistrate, himself admitting the inadvertent character of the disclosure in the following words :—" I confess I was very much struck at first with what appeared a breach of trust committed by Mr. Marvin in giving the *Globe* the summary of the Anglo-Russian agreement, but if the defendant had been made aware, and it appears now from what Mr. Irving" (assistant chief of the Treaty Department) " says that there was good reason for him to believe so—that the information would be published the following morning in the papers—it would not appear extraordinary that he should seek to anticipate the publication by conveying the information the same evening to the *Globe* newspaper."

In a word, the disclosure was the result of a misconception. Had Marvin been told it was to be kept secret, it would not have been disclosed ; but he was told it was to appear in full in the *Times* the next morning, and he anticipated doing no great harm in giving the *Globe*, which had been always very kind to him, a summary overnight. But the Treaty Department officials were wrong ; Salisbury and Schouvaloff meant to keep the agreement secret from Austria ; hence the sensation, the anger of the Government, and the mad rush at an ill-advised prosecution, intended to ruin Marvin and the *Globe* at the same time.

While exonerating Marvin from any breach of confidence in publishing the summary, Mr. Vaughan expressed the opinion that the *Globe* ought not to have published the Full Text. On this point opinions will differ. The *Globe* held that its reputation having suffered by Lord Salisbury declaring the summary to be false news, it had a right to reply by publishing the Full Text of the document. Both by Marvin and the *Globe* the publication was regarded entirely in the light of a rejoinder. There were plenty of newspapers that would have given a far higher sum for the Full Text than the *Globe* could afford to give, and as a matter of fact the amount actually given, £20, was looked upon by both parties as a nominal figure. The *Globe*, of course, bore the expense of defending Marvin, whose prosecution cost the country, according to a Government report subsequently issued, £70.

Beyond resigning his appointment at the Foreign Office, and his connection with the *Morning Advertiser*, the catastrophe in Downing Street made no difference to Marvin's operations, in so far as his Press connection remained unaltered, but it rendered his path difficult for several years. In France nothing kills a man like ridicule; in England to be held up as a "poor adventurer" is to block a political career. Marvin had been described by Mr. Poland as a "menial," at the Foreign Office, receiving 10 pence an hour, and Mr. Vaughan, in stopping the case, had prevented Mr. George Lewis pointing out in the defence that Marvin was a Russian scholar and traveller with a Press income of £400 or £500 a year. There was consequently a tendency to look upon Marvin as only a poor devil of a copyist, and to this tendency, which deprived his opinions of weight, was added the animosity of the whole Conservative Press, angry at the disastrous weakening the Government had experienced by the disclosure of the secret Treaty. Smarting at the attempt to crush him, Marvin struck out fiercely in his first book, *Our Public Offices*, published in 1879, wherein he described his career in the service and exposed the maladministration of the different departments. In this, while disclaiming any desire to reap any benefit from what he called the "false glory of nine days' notoriety," and avowing his non-possession of any genius or talent, he prognosticated that in time he should take a position in the influencing of public affairs, which had been assigned him by Destiny.

The prediction provoked ridicule. The book was not taken seriously, and with hardly an exception the reviewers condemned it. The *Saturday Review*, which a few years later published a special article—"A Word to Candidates"—advising them to sit down soberly and study Mr. Charles Marvin's works before addressing the public on the Central Asian Question, on this occasion published a ferocious attack, in which it predicted "eternal obscurity" for him, and begged the public to pay him no heed. Another paper, the *Civilian*, predicted that Marvin's literary aspirations would be gratified in one way only—"He will achieve distinction only as a writer of tailor's magazines."

All the same the book went into 5 editions, and has secured immortality by a reference in Gordon's *Khartoum Journals*. In Vol. I, page 42, Gordon says:—"I must say I do not love diplomatists as a rule (and I can fancy the turning up of noses at my venturing to express an opinion of them), I mean in their official attire, for personally, the few I know are most agreeable (and I specially except Alston, the chief clerk, and Weller, the hall porter, who has, of late years, become quite amiable); but taking them in their nostrums, with their satellites, from their chiefs down to their smaller fry, no one can imagine a more unsatisfactory lot of men to have anything

to do with. I have seen —, —, —, at different times, and when one left their august presences, one marvelled at the policy of Great Britain being in such hands. One would not mind if they did not inoculate with their virus those who get employed by them, but I have found Wilson of Anatolia, and many others, all impregnated with their ideas of sun worship and expediency. I own to having read with pleasure Marvin's *Our Public Offices.*"

The same year Marvin married his cousin, the daughter of the late Captain Marvin, R. H. A., and a few months afterwards issued his first " serious " book, *The Disastrous Russian Campaign against the Turkomans.* The genesis of this book is interesting. The *Daily News* had sent Mr. O'Donovan to the Caspian to describe Lomakin's campaign, but the Russians refused to allow him to leave the coast, and he saw nothing of the operations. Meanwhile several Russian newspapers were represented by correspondents, among them being the well known Alikhanoff, who acted as correspondent of the *Moscow Gazette*, and many of their letters had been translated for the London Press by Marvin, who, after rendering them into English, threw them in a rubbish box, in the belief that O'Donovan would ultimately write the story of the campaign. When he found this would not be the case, he took from the rubbish box all the Russian letters, pieced the story together, and issued what he called, *The Eyewitnesses' account of the Disastrous Russian Campaign against the Turcomans.*

The book was as well received as the previous one had been abused. Arminius Vambery was the first to give it warm welcome ; General Skobeleff recommended it on account of its impartiality, and the Russian General Staff ordered copies to be placed in the military libraries of Russia. A few weeks later a second book appeared, *Grodekoff's Ride to Herat,* an authorised translation of Grodekoff's famous ride from Samarcand to Herat in 1878. This was recommended by Sir Henry Rawlinson in a blue book, and experienced a good reception from the reviewers.

In 1880 attention was concentrated upon Merv. Putting aside his Press work, Marvin devoted several months to writing a fresh work, giving a full account of the Turcomans from English and Russian stories, a history of Merv, an account of Russian designs on Meshed, &c. The book was a bulky one of 450 pages, and contained 11 maps. One of these embraced a forecast of the future Afghan Frontier after the seizure of Merv, and declared that the annexation of Merv would infallibly lead Russia to Penjdeh—"a place for the first time made known to the public." How completely this prediction was realised four years later, is a matter of history. Another point he addressed himself to was to screw the head of India and England round from Turkestan to the Caspian. Without exception

English Statesmen and Generals kept gazing hard at Orenburg and Tashkent, while the Russians were creeping swiftly from the Caspian English politicians were quarrelling whether Russia could or could not march over the Hindu Kush. Marvin demonstrated that an easy road existed from the Caspian Sea.

Early in 1881 he published his first pamphlet, *The Russian Railway to Herat and India,* with a full sized map, and at an expense of £40 distributed 1,000 copies to Parliament and the Press. This was the first account of the Transcaspian railways—a project the significance of which, in spite of Marvin's pamphlet, was so little realised that the Marquis of Hartington covered with ridicule an M. P. who asked if "Russia meant to make a line to Askabad." Here again Marvin's forecast of the immense revolution that would be accomplished by the railway,—a forecast which he alone in England made, and insisted on unheeded, was realized in a few short years. The rest of the year he devoted to preparing a history of Skobeleff's siege of Geok Tepe, a work which after consuming several months, was put aside for a journey to Russia and has never been finished. The journey to Russia arose thus: Early in 1882 there was a deal of excitement over the delimitation of the Atreck frontier, and the Radical Press angrily assailed Russia for having secretly made large annexations. Receiving from Russia an official copy of the Teheran Convention, Marvin prepared a map in which he proved Russia had seized no territory at all, and allayed the excitement by issuing 600 copies to Parliament and the Press. Meanwhile, Skobeleff had created a European sensation by his Paris speeches, and Mr. Joseph Cowen, M. P., wishing to know his views of the Central Asian Question, asked Marvin to go to France and interview him. Before he could do so Skobeleff started home, and at Mr. Cowen's request Marvin proceeded to St. Petersburg. Arriving there in advance of the hero of Plevna, he spent the time interviewing Ignatieff, M. de Giers, General Annenkoff, General Grodekoff and other Statesmen and Generals; winding up with several interviews with Skobeleff himself. These conversations were published on his arrival home in a volume form entitled, *The Russian Advance towards India.*

The day after the issue of the work he started for St. Petersburg again, with a mission to make a report on Russian finance and visit the exhibition at Moscow. A few days after his arrival he was shocked one morning on visiting General Grodekoff to find that Skobeleff had suddenly died the day before. Proceeding to Moscow with Grodekoff, Marvin was a witness of the lying-in-state of the dead hero, and at the request of the family accompanied the funeral to the province of Riazin—over 100 officers, for the most part Skobeleff's favourite officers, proceeding in the train. The

journey there and back occupied four days. On the return, an interesting episode occurred. The *Novæ Vremya* had translated from *The Russian Advance*, Marvin's account of Skobeleff, and this had been copied into all the Russian papers with eulogistic comments. On the arrival of the funeral train at the first large station there was a rush for the papers, and the officers were so pleased with what Marvin had said in his book of Skobeleff that they chose a spokesman to publicly express to him their satisfaction at his kindly remarks. Marvin's account of Skobeleff "at home" was afterwards incorporated in the popular biographies of Skobeleff that were sold by hundreds of thousands in the streets, it was disseminated by the Government in *Reading for Soldiers* in all the garrison libraries in the empire, and was translated into Polish, Finish, Tartar and other languages. On his return Marvin prepared another large book, *The Russians at Merv and Herat*, which embodied Alikhanoff's story of his secret caravan journey to Merv, Lessar's account of his journey to Herat, Annenkoff's views of the invasion of India, and a number of chapters on Russia's material growth in the Caspian Sea. Like all his books, it was handsomely got up and contained 470 pages, and 21 maps, plans and illustrations ; the pictures of Merv being the first published in Europe. In one chapter, devoted to the "Political Bearings of Baku oil," he described the marvellous oil deposits of the Caspian, then unknown in Europe; predicting a great commercial future for them and an immense political influence in consolidating Russia's power in the Caspian. This prediction has again been fulfilled to a remarkable degree.

The book was hardly out, when Marvin was selected to represent the *Morning Post* at the Czar's coronation. Within a few weeks of his return from Moscow he was again off to the Caucasus to visit the Russian Petroleum Region. This journey he described in another book, with 21 maps and illustrations, called the *Region of the Eternal Fire*. Speaking two years later at Liverpool, the Earl of Ravensworth, President of the Institution of Naval Architects—said of this book, "it is with great pleasure that I am able to announce that we have present to-day the distinguished traveller and writer, Mr. Charles Marvin, the author of that most interesting book—more fascinating than any novel I know of—"*The Region of the Eternal Fire*." This eulogy by a peer was pronounced just eight years after Mr. Poland had described him as "a menial at the Foreign Office, receiving ten pence an hour." "The book reads like a tale of the Arabian Nights," wrote Professor T. E. Thorpe of the Royal School of Mines, in a recent review of the popular edition.

The same year (1884) also saw the issue of a second orange pamphlet, *Baku the Petrolia of Europe*, a technical work, *The Petroleum Industry of Russia*, published at *Engineering* office, and

another large book, *Reconnoitring Central Asia*, a popular account of the exploration of the region between the Caspian and India. This rapidly went into three editions; besides these, he issued to the Press gratis hectographed maps of each Russian move towards Merv, Sarakhs, and the Murghab, and these were printed in the *Graphic*, *Illustrated London News* and other papers. He was a constant contributor to eighteen different papers.

Early in 1885 he published another pamphlet, *The Russian Annexation of Merv*, under the following circumstances:—

A London correspondent wrote to the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, February 28, 1884:—"I have read your admirable review of Mr. Marvin's pamphlet on Merv, and it has occurred to me that the circumstances under which it was produced and the influence it exercised on the debate may interest your readers. Mr. Marvin had contemplated issuing a pamphlet this week, as announced in the *Athenæum*, and was taken by surprise on Thursday morning to find the debate fixed for the next day, and not later on, as generally anticipated. At eleven o'clock nothing was ready but the MS., but Messrs. Allen placed the whole of their resources at his disposal, and thanks to the rapid photo-engraving process and the never-ceasing energy of all concerned, 25 advance copies of the pamphlet, with the three maps and the frontispiece of Merv, were completed by seven o'clock at night, and within an hour were circulating in the London Press and in the House of Commons. In connection with the wholesale distribution of copies in the House the next day, a difficulty now presented itself. The whole edition could not be finished in sufficient time to ensure its delivery by post by the time the House assembled. This obstacle Mr. Marvin overcame by making an arrangement with one of the lobby messengers, who agreed to distribute them by hand. By one o'clock the next day the messenger already had the batch, and soon after the House assembled, half the persons in the lobby might have been seen with the orange pamphlet in their hands. As the House filled, a demand arose for copies on the part of minor members who had not received them, and to meet this, Mr. Marvin, who was in the lobby, despatched a special messenger for a hundred more. In this manner, when the debate actually did come off, nearly everybody used it as a handbook, and there can be hardly a doubt that it exercised a very important effect upon the speeches, observable in the unanimity with which the members of both parties insisted on the necessity of trusting Russia no more, and the imperative need of a firm attitude and decisive measures on the part of the Government. During the debate, Mr. Marvin sat under the gallery, watching the effect of his pamphlet."

This went into a second edition, and the late Colonel Rivett-Carnac published a third edition for India in Bombay. *Russia's*

Power of Seizing Herat, and *Shall Russia have Penjdeh?* were two other pamphlets that followed. Several lectures were also delivered in London against the Russian advance. In the spring the war-cloud deepened, and the arrival of Lessar in London, followed by Komaroff's insult to Lumsden, excited the public to a fever heat. To counteract the intrigues of the pro-Russian party, Marvin decided to issue a popular account of the Afghan question. Having arranged matters with Messrs. Warne, the publishers, he came home, and commencing the work kept at it night and day till it was finished, taking alternate spells of sleep and writing, of four or five hours' duration. The entire book, 200 pages, was written and printed in 7 days, and by the afternoon of the 8th the first edition of 10,000 copies had been disposed of. *The Russians at the Gates of Herat* achieved immediate success. It was translated into French, several editions were published in America, and over 60,000 copies were sold. During the war scare that followed, Marvin lectured to large audiences at Newcastle, Liverpool, and other towns, the chair being taken sometimes by a Radical and sometimes by a Conservative. In these lectures Marvin avoided party politics, but in the Press he maintained a bitter crusade against the Gladstone Government.

The war scare ended by England surrendering to Russia the frontier she had seized, and in the lull that followed, Marvin was ill for several months with an affection of the right lung, contracted at one of his lectures. However, at the request of a number of politicians, he managed to prepare a popular pamphlet on the Russo-Indian Question—*Russia's power of attacking India*, with four maps, of which 10,000 were circulated.

In the spring of 1886 he was invited to prepare a popular account of hospital life for the Hospital Sunday Fund, and, as special commissioner of the *Lancet*, spent nearly a month in the various hospitals. 30,000 copies were circulated of *Within the Hospital Walls*, and in regard to its effect *Hazell's Annual* states that the jump in the subscriptions in 1886 from £34,000 to £40,000 was due to this work and the public meeting held. At one of these meetings the Earl of Dartmouth said :—"I hope many people will take the trouble to read this story, *Within the Hospital Walls*, because I am sure that if you only begin to read it, you will feel not only interested but intensely touched. I myself was greatly affected by the account given of the old bird catcher, who was brought to the hospital to die, and left his birds to the hospital."

An orange pamphlet, *The Coming Deluge of Russian Petroleum*, attracted great attention in the autumn, and was twice translated into Russian and twice into German. It was followed in the spring of 1887 by the *Molock of Paraffin*, which ushered in the crusade against dangerous mineral oil lamps. This attained an issue of

30,000 copies, and provoked bitter controversies with the lamp trade, but ultimately led to the appointment of a Government Commission to report upon unsafe lamps. *England as a Petroleum Power*, was another petroleum pamphlet issued the same year, which closed with one more on *English Africa*, describing the hostile aims of Germans and Boers in South Africa.

On January 1st, 1888, Marvin proceeded to Russia and spent three months there, for the most part at St. Petersburg, where a Petroleum Exhibition was being held. During his absence from home the Balloon Society awarded him a gold medal for his writings on petroleum, and the Imperial Russian Technical Society elected him corresponding member. A nervous affection of the eyes, arising from the snowglare and the intensity of the light at the Petroleum Exhibition, checked his literary operations for a time on his return. The chief incident later in the year was the suppression by the Government of the lecture on "Cutting Russia's Road to India," he had been invited to deliver before the officers of the garrison at Woolwich. The outcry against this by the Press was so great that the Government made amends by engaging Marvin to deliver two lectures on petroleum before the Royal Engineers at Chatham. For this a grant of £10 per lecture was made. It is curious to compare this estimate of Marvin's value with that of eleven years earlier. The lectures were timed to occupy about an hour. In 1878 he was paid at 10 pence an hour, in 1889 at the rate of £10 an hour.

A few weeks after these lectures, Marvin issued a new orange wrapper pamphlet entitled, *The Coming Oil Age*. This secured over 200 reviews, a large number of them, leading articles, within six weeks of issue. These orange wrapper pamphlets became quite a speciality with Marvin. Twelve were published with a united issue of over 60,000 copies, and most of them, beside being greeted with hundreds of reviews at home, were translated into German and Russian. Their aim was always to educate Parliament and the Press at a stroke, and through Parliament and the Press, Government and the country.

Marvin ever made a distinction between notoriety and reputation, and never sought to make capital out of the sensation of the Anglo-Russian Agreement, the notoriety of which was forced upon him by the inadvertent publication of what was not regarded as a secret document at the Foreign Office itself. Most men would have allowed a prosecution by a Conservative Government to colour their opinions, they would have been inflamed with animosity against the party. Marvin, on the other hand, dismissed the affair from his mind, and during the five years' campaign of the Russo-Indian Question, preceding the war scare of 1885, he not only never wrote a word against the Conservatives, but supported them against the Gladstone Government. It was only when Lord Salisbury

surrendered Badghis to Russia and East Africa to Germany that he sharply criticised that Minister's policy.

His influence with the general public rested upon the fact that he always took an Imperial non-party view of politics and meted out equal justice to Conservative and Liberal. Having no aspiration for Parliament and a contempt for honours, decorations and degrees, he had no political ties to warp his criticism, and spoke out with a fearlessness tempered only by a desire to avoid what he termed the "cantankerous nagging spirit of scab-pecking Radicalism." As a journalist, he filled every post in a newspaper office except that of shorthand reporter, and he was a regular contributor to the Conservative and Radical Press on Foreign and Colonial questions: a condition insisted on in all cases being that he should be allowed to express his own views and not those of any party. This was not easy to manage, nor did it always succeed. The *Daily News*, for instance, in 1886, engaged him for a time to write its leaders on Eastern topics; and as he would not write down Salisbury and write up Gladstone a compromise was attempted by relieving him of night duty once or twice a week and putting on a party-writer to make up, by a vigorous partisan onslaught, for the missing element in Marvin's leaders. Such an arrangement was awkward for all concerned, and as Marvin would not take up, even anonymously, the rôle of party-writer, it had to come to an end. Marvin's favourite organ was the London *Morning Post*, to which he contributed not only leaders, but long "inside articles" on Colonial, Indian and Foreign policy.

Curiously enough, the name of the newspaper with which his pen was most closely identified outside the limits of the United Kingdom was also the *Morning Post*, published in Allahabad, the capital of the North-West Provinces, India. This journal, which is the only thoroughly independent newspaper in the first rank of the Anglo-Indian press, from the outset of its career attracted to its service a staff of distinguished writers, among the most prominent of whom were Colonel G. B. Malleson, the eminent military historian, and Mr. Marvin. The latter sent his first letter to the *Morning Post* under date of June 22nd, 1888, and he was a regular weekly contributor until about a month before his untimely death, his last letter being dated November 7th, 1890. No writer for any Anglo-Indian newspaper has ever been received with such attention by all classes, from the members of Government down to the meanest English-reading babu, as was Marvin, and when it became known that his letters were to be re-published in their present form there was an immediate and wide-spread demand in advance for copies.

To the *Globe* he contributed some thousands of the front page notes of the day and articles, and found time, while writing on politics to some 20 papers, to act as reviewer—having reviewed over 1,030 books during the last ten years of his life.

During the five years' pen campaign against Russia, preceding the war scare of 1885, Marvin published 15 books and pamphlets, consisting collectively of over 3,200 pages, with 120 illustrations and maps; besides contributing several thousand articles to the Press and undertaking four journeys to Russia. It is no secret that he spent over £1,000 on this campaign. "Marvin's services in respect of the Russo-Indian Question have been invaluable," wrote Colonel Malleson in his *Russo-Afghan Question* in 1885. "He heard with his own ears the opinions expressed on the subject by Russian Generals, and diplomatists, and for the love of England spent his own money to warn England's people." An author cannot have everything; if he goes in for money-making he must forego a deal of reputation. Marvin was not content to simply hold certain opinions, he insisted that everybody should know what opinions he held, and was prepared in his expenditure of time and money to attain this end. If he, within a few years of holding the lowest position in the Foreign Office, receiving less pay than a messenger, attained the position of first English authority on the Russo-Indian Question, a position assigned him not simply by the English Press but by the principal newspapers of America and the Continent, it must be conceded that he worked hard and spent his money freely to achieve such a distinction. "Marvin is a man of Iron Industry," wrote Vambery years ago.

Since 1886, he attained a similar position in regard to petroleum, being regarded as the principal authority on that subject in England. How he became an oil expert was quite by chance. In his *Russians at Merv and Herat*, he devoted a chapter to the "Political Bearings of Baku." This led to merchants soliciting his advice upon Russian petroleum, and when he visited the region in 1883, he made a general study of petroleum with the result that without any design on his part, he became by degrees, a petroleum expert, consulted in all branches of the industry. He was a Director of three public Companies, and was associated as adviser with several more.

His mornings were devoted for the most part to journalism and literature at Plumstead. The afternoons were given to board meetings and petroleum consultations in the City, and the evenings to politics, unless when encroached upon by petroleum business. Marvin had a wide connection among politicians of all parties, and took an interest in many questions with which his name is not associated. It is no secret that he long enjoyed the confidence of

the ablest military men in regard to their plans for defending India—including the highest in India itself. It is this personal knowledge, coupled with an acquaintance with the principal Russian Generals and their views, which gave him a unique position as a public writer on the Russo-Indian Question.

In all he published 25 books and pamphlets—the whole since 1879.

Grosvenor House, until two or three years ago, overlooked Plumstead Common, and commanded a pleasant view of Shooters' Hill. A building boom in Plumstead, however, hemmed it in and robbed the locality of its former country aspect. Plumstead, Marvin has described as the "Paradise of the Parochial Skunk." Marvin's literary work was carried on in three rooms, among which was distributed his library, consisting of between 3,000 and 4,000 volumes Methodical organization prevailed. In the morning the English and foreign papers were rapidly scanned, and all items of importance cut out and placed in boxes. Both as regards the Russo-Indian and the Petroleum Question, Marvin maintained quite an "Intelligence Branch." All letters, received no matter from whom or on what subject, were gummed or sewn in a foolscap diary, and this was bound into a volume at the end of the year. All letters and notes sent away were copied, and a row of 24 volumes of copying books, in a press, contained about 15,000 letters Marvin wrote since he commenced his literary campaign in 1876. Any letter received or any sent away could be turned up at a moment's notice, and every point of Marvin's career followed with mathematical accuracy. Similarly, rows of volumes contained his bound manuscripts, other rows the bound proofs of his works, and other rows again archived copies of all editions of his published books and volumes of pamphlets; while quite a formidable row represented the scores of books by other authors in which a reference has been made to Marvin. In another press rows of scrap books contained a copy of every article he contributed to the Press, and other rows the thousands of reviews on his books and references to himself personally—all of which were religiously preserved. The passages of the house were lined with large scale wall maps, and in presses was a large collection of maps of all kinds referring to every part of the empire. Innumerable Russian objects about the house reminded the visitor of Marvin's connection with Russia, and were more interesting perhaps than the cupboard filled with lamps and oil, and odorously suggestive of his investigations in petroleum. Among these Russian objects was the cap Skobeleff wore throughout his last Turcoman campaign against Geok Tepe, presented by the General to Marvin as a souvenir a few weeks before his death. Another prominent object in a glass case was

the baker's sack which the detectives borrowed to convey Marvin's private papers to the Treasury when he was placed under arrest in 1878. An arrest ten years later would have involved the use of a wagon for this purpose.

But, alas! the "master" is dead, and his works can now alone keep alive in their influence his great and varied talents. Some of theletters to be found in the "Miscellaneous" section, towards the end of this book contains touching references to the malady which fin a ly proved fatal. He was attacked by the influenza epidemic, and its effects never left him. As he tells himself, he often wrote from a sick bed, and it was only the constant care of a devoted wife that prevented him from sooner wearing out his exhausted frame by a too close attention to work. He partially recovered from the first severe seizure, and was about to start on a long projected American tour when he had a relapse, and was at once ordered by his medical attendant to a seaside resort in the south of England. Here, after many variations of a painful illness, he at last succumbed on December 5th, 1890. He filled a distinct place in the social and political autonomy of England, and with him that place has died, for there is no man able to tenant it.



PART I.

INDIA, AFGHANISTAN

AND

CENTRAL ASIA.

*RUSSIAN TRADE ENTERPRISE IN CENTRAL ASIA.**



LONDON, *June 29th, 1888.*

THE mercantile world of Moscow has just lost a valuable member in the person of N. P. Kudrine, whose death is announced in the Moscow newspapers reaching me yesterday. Kudrine was a product of the last Russian advance in Central Asia. A merchant of Orenburg, slightly interested in Turkestan trade like all Orenburg merchants used to be more or less, he conceived the idea, after the Russian occupation of Merv, of making that point a base of commercial operations in Central Asia, and formed, without any Government support or subsidy, a small private company of Orenburg merchants to carry out his scheme. At first the office of the company was at Orenburg; but after a few months it was shifted to Moscow, where Kudrine formed relations with Morozoff and other great cotton manufacturers, which materially aided him in his designs. Operations commenced in 1884 with the establishment of depôts at Askabad and Merv, and from those points they were extended to Tchardjui, Bokhara, Khokand, Tashkent and Kashgar, on the Turkestan side, and to Meshed and Kuchan on the side of Khorassan. At each of these towns Kudrine kept extensive stocks of Russian goods, some obtained for cash, but a good deal sold on commission, and, on the other hand, he collected and forwarded to Russia, cotton, silk, carpets, and a variety of other products of the East, having commission offices in Moscow and twelve other Russian towns. According to the last annual report the company furnished the Minister of Finance, in accordance with law, the operations in 1887 amounted to 4,163,334 roubles, or over £400,000, and the net profit to 755,633 roubles, or more than £75,000. Considering that the company had been only three years in existence, and had incurred heavy expenses in establishing its depôts, such a result was most satisfactory, and gives an idea of what England has lost through allowing herself to be excluded from the markets of Central Asia. A year ago, Kudrine received from the Emir of Bokhara a large grant of land suitable for the cultivation of cotton, and from the plantations formed cotton is

already being received at Moscow. Other plantations were on the point of being started at Merv and Tejend, when he fell ill a short time ago; and he also had an idea of establishing, if possible, a depôt in Herat, supplied with goods from the depôt at Meshed, which latter has from the outset attracted the attention of merchants from Herat. Now that he is dead, the power of the firm will pass from an invalid to a second vigorous founder A. C. Klutcharoff, an Orenburg merchant, who has displayed almost as much activity and skill as Kudrine himself.

Kudrine represented a type of Russian merchant, with which we shall become increasingly familiar in the future. While England has practically withdrawn from any further attempts to exploit Persia and Afghanistan, (at any rate neither individual merchants nor the Chambers of Commerce in England seem to care in the least about the markets of those countries), Russia is paying more and more attention to the commercial exploitation of the region lying between the Caspian and India. Kudrine is not simply a case of one swallow making a summer. Even more successful than his company has been the firm of Konshin, which enjoys predominance at Merv and Askabad, and has commercial relations with every part of Khorassan. Konshin was a name unknown previous to the Turcoman campaign of 1879. Since then the money made by army contracts has been judiciously expended in pushing trade in every direction, and now the firm acts as the principal intermediary between the native cotton growers of Turkestan, and the cotton manufacturers of Moscow. To encourage the cultivation of the American cotton plant, the Konshin firm has repeatedly acted with great generosity, giving away to the Turcomans of Merv, Tejend, and Akhal in a single year five tons of cotton seed. This has already resulted in crops of splendid cotton, fetching a high price in Moscow, and encouraging the Tsar's Government to persevere in the great scheme of establishing in the Merv district cotton plantations for the purpose of supplying Russia, with all the cotton she requires. This scheme is connected with the irrigation of what is officially known as the "Tsar's Domain." At the direct intervention of Alexander III himself, Colonel Kozel-Poklevsky, has been furnished with a grant of £300,000 to erect a dam in the Murghab valley, thanks to which 1,000,000 acres of the most fertile soil in the world will be added to the Merv oasis. There it is proposed to cultivate the bulk of the cotton required by Russia. At present Russia uses 36,000,000 lbs. of cotton yearly, valued at 100,000,000 roubles, or £10,000,000. If Colonel Kozel-Poklevsky's project can be realised, it is believed that this amount of cotton will be grown at home, and Russia will save the ten millions sterling now sent annually abroad. There are opponents of Kozel-Poklevsky, such as, for instance, General

Gloukhovsky, long the head (and reputedly the most inefficient head) of the expedition which from the conquest of Khiva to the annexation of Merv kept surveying, the Kara Kum sands for the proposed diversion of the Oxus into the Caspian without achieving any results, who hold that even if Kozel-Poklevsky's scheme succeeds, this amount of cotton cannot be grown on the area irrigated; but at any rate the Tsar believes that it can, or most of it, and if his belief be realised, he will become one of the largest cotton-growers in the world, and will enjoy the monopoly of the raw cotton trade in Russia. Under any circumstances, we may look to Merv not only becoming to a certain degree a cotton-growing place of the future, but also a manufacturing port, there being at the present moment before the Minister of Finance several applications from Russian capitalists to start cotton mills in the oasis. It may be considered a bold forecast, but it is by no means improbable that we may some day see the Russian Government refusing to permit England to send troops to Herat, or any way control it, because Herat is necessary for the protection of Russia's great cotton interests at Merv.

Of course the successful completion of the Transcaspian Railway to Samarcand has greatly stimulated Russia's trading tendencies in that direction; but the line itself would have exercised little influence, but for the grand water-way that exists at the back of it. Throughout the length and breadth of the Volga valley there has been for years a continuous and rapid progress, to which a powerful impulse has been given by the amazing development of the petroleum trade at Baku, the suppression of piracy on the Turcoman coast, the construction of the railway from Baku to Batoum, and the establishment of order along the Persian trade routes from the Caspian to Teheran, Shahrood and Meshed. On the River Volga the steamboat service improves every year. There are now over twenty steamers of the American type running there, and new ones are added every season. One that has just arrived from Belgium, to carry 2,500 passengers, is most sumptuously furnished and illuminated with the electric light. Several new cargo steamers have also just left the Neva for the Caspian Sea, where the opening of the Transcaspian Railway has created a demand for further transport. In connection with the Volga a new movement has been initiated this season. In general, Russians are not much encouraged by the railway or steamboat companies to indulge in excursions; but the journey of two or three parties of English tourists, conducted by Gaye or Cook, from St. Petersburg to Batoum, viâ the Volga and Baku, has imparted a little enterprise to the Zeveke Company on the Volga, and in a few days, one of the floating palaces will start on an excursion down the Volga from Nijni Novgorod to Astrakhan and Baku. At Baku, by the way,

the annual Central Asian fair, started last year, is now in full swing, and is reported to be very successful. The merchants of Moscow, Tula, Nijni, and other towns have made a large display of goods, and the fair is well attended by native traders from Samarcand, Bokhara, Merv and Meshed, most of whom have arrived, viâ the new Transcaspian Railway. Thanks to the steamers that run almost daily from Nijni Novgorod and other railway points on the Volga to Baku, and to the railway service that exists between Samarcand and Azoun Ada, the terminus of the Transcaspian Railway opposite Baku, the trade of Moscow and Central Asia is focussed on Baku, and marks out for the place a great commercial future, quite apart from the flourishing petroleum business. At no distant date the completion of the railway between the Caspian and Teheran, now in course of rapid construction, and with one section already open for traffic; will place Baku in steam communication with the Shah's capital, as well as with Moscow and Samarcand, and impart another impulse to its trade; which from a fourth direction is fed by its railway from Batoum. If a war does not occur to check this trade and the petroleum industry, there is every reason to believe that, before the close of the century Baku will rank as the fourth city of the Russian Empire, surpassed in size and population only by St. Petersburg, Moscow and Warsaw. Yet it is only a few years ago that a Foreign Office official passed through Baku, and saw there "nothing of interest," and the Duke of Argyll was pooh-poohing the idea of any importance ever attaching to the Caspian as a base of operations against India.

What will greatly add to the commercial and military importance of the Caspian before long; will be the extension of the Russian railway system to its shores. It is true that it already possesses a line from Batoum to Baku ; but this stands by itself; it is not linked to the Russian or European network. The shortest way to do so would be to continue the railway system, now halting at Vladikavkaz, in Cis-Caucasia, across the Caucasus ridge to Tiflis. This, however, would take too long to construct, and cost too much to suit the impatient Russian Government, and although frequently discussed, the plans still remain pigeon-holed in the Ministry of Ways of Communications All the same, the Minister, Admiral Possiette, has, in his portfolio, two schemes for extending the network to the Caspain Sea—one from Vladikavkaz to Petrovsk, a port not far north of Baku, and another from Tsaritzin on the Volga to Petrovsk. The most direct route from St. Petersburg and Moscow would be the latter, and it is this, with an extension from Petrovsk to Baku, which is the most favoured by the Tiflis authorities. On the other hand, the Vladikavkaz-Petrovsk route is not only older but better supported financially, and seems

to stand the better chance of being adopted. In either case, whether the Vladikavkaz or the Tsaritzin lines be extended to Petrovsk, a continuation to Baku along the coast is almost sure to take place afterwards, and the question of selecting the route and starting building operation is in the meanwhile only a matter of months. Such a line would be bound to pay, because not only it would have the traffic, and in winter the whole traffic of the Transcaspian Railway to support it, but also a vast oil export. At present, owing to the clogging in the Suran Pass, Baku cannot export more than a certain quantity of oil viâ Batoum. The new railway would allow a free and uninterrupted running of oil tank-trucks from the refineries at Baku to every railway point in Russia, and to the foreign depôts on the Austrian and German frontiers. The facilities for trade that would be created thereby are obvious, and the careers of Kudrine, Konshin, and others demonstrate that Russia possesses merchants ready to avail themselves of them. When I was at Baku in 1883, I had to pay a visit to the office which the Russian Transport Company had opened for the booking of goods to Russia and abroad. The office was a small one, and a surperficial observer would have reported home that it possessed "nothing of interest." In the interval the operations of the Company between Central Asia and Russia have increased to such an extent, that it has been compelled to place steamers of its own on the Caspian Sea to run between Azoun Ada and Baku, and recently has purchased four steamers in England to run between Batoum and Odessa. Thus, while the foreign trade of Russia, owing to the fear of war, and the lowness of the exchange value of the rouble, is experiencing at present a depression at St Petersburg, the home trade between one portion of the Empire and the other is undergoing rapid development, above all in the Black Sea, Caspian and Central Asia. In a word, Russia is waning commercially in the White Sea, and languishing in the Baltic, while waxing everywhere in the south. This tendency of trade and colonization is far too often lost sight of by English statesmen and soldiers. Both try to realise the military forces Russia in the future will be able to array before Herat or Kandahar; but is there one of them conscious that before the end of the century there will probably be more Russians residing at the single point of Baku, than there will be English soldiers and civilians scattered over the whole of India? I question it. I am afraid there are very few Englishmen who realise that while we are simply sojourners in India, the Russians, settling down in the Caucasus and Caspian region, regard the new country as their home. In that sense the Caspian base possesses to my mind a significance which the majority of military and political writers on India seem to lose sight of.



THE FUTURE RUSSIAN RAILWAY TO INDIA.

LONDON, *July 27th, 1888.*

THE conferences that recently took place between the Russian Minister of Railways, Admiral Possiette, and the Governor of the Caucasus, Prince Dondukoff-Korsakoff, while attending the opening of the railway from the Rostoff-Vladikavkaz trunk line to the Black Sea port of Novorossisk, have evidently had reference to the extension of the Russian system into Persia and towards India, judging by the series of inspired articles that have since appeared in the semi-official Tiflis *Kavkaz* dealing with the subject. The points discussed in these articles are three—first, how to shorten the communication connecting the Caucasus with Russia and Europe; secondly, how to extend the Russo-Caucasus railway system into Persia; and thirdly, how to bring about a junction of the Russo-Caucasus–Persian lines with those of India, and defeat all rival attempts to tap the land traffic of the East. It will be seen from this programme that it covers a good deal of ground, and raises issues of the character of the highest political importance. At present, neither the public nor the Government in England or in India manifests any desire to tie India to Europe by railway. Whatever may be the intentions of the Indian Government in regard to the railway now slowly progressing beyond Pishin in the direction of Kandahar, they do not appear to aim at an extension beyond the Helmund towards Herat, and the Russian railway system at Merv. In this country public apathy is complete. Since the death of Sir William Andrew, who advocated the Euphrates Railway for more than a quarter of a century, no one has concerned himself any further about that route; and in spite of occasional rumours, the projects of a railway through Asia Minor, from Constantinople to the Persian Gulf and India, have dropped almost entirely into the background. At any rate, there is no burning interest on the part of the British public to concern itself in the least with the junction of India with the railway network of Europe. On the other hand, the success of the Transcaspian Railway has emboldened the Russian Government to undertake other similar schemes. All manner of railway projects are being discussed for dominating the trade of the East, and there is a strong desire on the part of Russian officials to enjoy similar luck to that of General Annenkoff. For the moment that general is the hero of the hour. The high distinction bestowed upon him by the Tsar, as high as a general commonly receives for conquering a province, has set a seal upon his reputation, and

rendered a man who, only eight years ago, was ridiculed by the Russian Press for his grandiose desert railway schemes, a sort of second Lesseps in public estimation The eclipsed, the Minister of Railways—the Transcaspian Railway was built by the Russian War Department—naturally feels jealous at the success of Annenkoff and wishes to surpass him Hence his bold project for pushing a cheap line right across Siberia to Vladivostock. The Governor of the Caucasus, on his part, is jealous at the Transcaspian territory exciting so much interest by its railway, and seeks to recover prominence for his province by pushing railways through Persia to India. Hence the articles in the Tiflis semi-official press advocating a railway from Moscow to India, viâ Tsaritzin, Petrovsk, Teheran, Asterabad, Meshed and Herat.

These possess particular interest because they indicate a new route for connecting Calais with Calcutta by railway without a single sea-break, contrary in this respect to the Transcaspian route, which involves the crossing of the Caspian. Up to now, both in Russia and in England, writers in discussing the future railway to India have accepted the Transcaspian as the probable line. The organ of the Caucasus Government breaks away from this view altogether. It declares the Transcaspian Railway to be unfitted for Indian traffic, and condemns the transfer of passengers and goods across the Caspian Sea from Azoun Ada to Petrovsk or Baku, inevitable if it be used. Given a shorter land route, without any such transfer, and the Transcaspian route is sure to be beaten. Such a route is found in the one through the Caspian provinces of Persia and Khorassan, along the line chosen by Napoleon for the proposed Franco-Russian invasion of India, or, rather, a little to the north of it, for the Caucasus Government wishes to improve on that also. A few details of the proposed route may be interesting. At present the railway system of Russia penetrates south as far as Vladikavkaz, at the foot of the Caucasus range. To complete the connection with the Transcaspian line it must be extended either to Petrovsk, on the Caspian, a port to the east of Vladikavkaz, or else over the Caucasus to Tiflis, where it would join the Batoum line running to Baku, another port on the Caspian, a little to the south of Petrovsk. Owing to cost the latter undertaking is out of the running, and it is believed that the Vladikavkaz-Petrovsk line will be commenced in a few weeks. The *Kavkaz*, however, is not satisfied with this route from Russia to the Caspian Sea It wants a still shorter one, and recommends an extension of the Tsaritzin line to Petrovsk. Tsaritzin is a railway terminus on the Volga, at the point where that river runs in towards the river Don. From Moscow to Baku, viâ Riazan, Tsaritzin and Petrovsk, would be 1,391 miles; to Teheran 1,841 miles. From Moscow to Baku, viâ Vladikavkaz and Petrovsk, the distance is, by way of Kharkoff, 1,684 miles, or if the Voronej

line to Vladikavkaz be adopted, 1,613 miles—the distances to Teheran being respectively 2,134 miles and 2,063 miles. The Tsaritzin route to the Persian capital is thus shorter than the Vladikavkaz-Petrovsk route by 293 and 222 miles, respectively. If, instead of the Vladikavkaz line being pushed on to Petrovsk it were extended to Tiflis, the railway route from Moscow to Teheran, viâ Baku, would be 1,983 miles, or 142 miles longer than the Tsaritzin route. In this manner it is clear that an extension of the Russian Railway down the Volga, from Tsaritzin to the Caspian ports of Petrovsk, Baku and Resht, would be the shortest route from Moscow to Teheran. This route the Caucasus Government is doing its best to get adopted by the Imperial authorities

The next point to consider is the route to Herat Two are mentioned—the Transcaspian and the Khorassan. The first starts from the port of Azoun Ada, on the east coast of the Caspian Sea, opposite Baku and Petrovsk, and according to the computation of the *Kavkaz* would be 729 miles long.

	Miles.
Azoun Ada to Askabad	300
Askabad to Sarakhs	200
Sarakhs to Pul-i-khatun	40
Pul-i-khatun to Khombou	76
Khombou to Herat	113
Total ...	729

Instead of starting from Azoun Ada, the *Kavkaz* would sooner see it start from Gez, the port of the Persian city of Asterabad, and follow the route through Khorassan, recommended by General Petrusevitch years ago. This would be 610 miles long.

	Miles.
Gez to Asterabad	46
Asterabad to Budjnurd	182
Budjnurd to Kutchan	66
Kutchan to Meshed	93
Meshed to Herat	223
Total ...	610

This route would traverse an amazingly fertile country the whole way, and the *Kavkaz* suggests that the line should be constructed at the expense of the Russian Government. It does not believe the Persian authorities would offer any opposition to it. So

far as the railway from Herat district to Pishin is concerned it assumes that, that would be constructed by the Indian Government.

In this manner, passengers to Europe from India would journey, viâ Candahar, Herat, Meshed, Asterabad and Gez, taking the steamer thence to Baku or Petrovsk This would be only temporary, since from Asterabad the line would be extended in time along the Caspian littoral to Resht, and thence proceed, viâ Baku, Petrovsk, Tsaritzin, etc, across Russia and Europe to Calais. Such a route would render possible an unbroken railway journey the whole way from Calcutta to Calais and its adoption is strongly urged by the organ of the Caucasus Government. Since the task of selecting the route falls to Russia, it thinks she should choose the shortest, and construct the line in a solid and durable manner throughout. Competition of any serious character is considered out of the question. England manifests no desire to extend the European system from Constantinople to Quetta, and neither Turkey nor Persia will construct a through Railway for her. Moreover, a line from Constantinople through Asia Minor to the Persian Gulf, and thence across southern Persia to Kandahar and Quetta, would encounter many serious engineering difficulties, lacking in the Russian route Those political veterans who once advocated an English line from Constantinople to India, viâ Teheran, Meshed and Herat will feel how much ground England has lost in Persia at hearing the term "Russian route" applied to the section from Teheran to Herat. Yet the Russians are not far wrong in regarding it as their own; for it is difficult to see what can prevent northern Persia from ultimately falling into Russia's hands, except, a war disastrous to Russia in Europe. The section from Teheran to Shahrood (248 miles) might be constructed by Persia, but the link to Gez (100 miles), would be constructed most probably by Russia. Although the railway might make a detour at first from Baku and Resht to Teheran, and thence to Shahrood, the line would ultimately work round the Caspian coast, viâ Resht, to Gez, avoiding the Persian capital. So far as goods traffic is concerned, Gez would be the port for Indian goods bound for Russia, or Russian goods destined for India, not Resht (Enzeli) and within hail of Gez, the Russians already possess the naval station of Ashurada. One end of the Khorassan section from Gez (Asterabad) to Meshed and Herat, would be thus under Russian control.

Having given an epitome of the views current at Tiflis just now in regard to the future railway route to India, it remains to say a few words about their tendency. My own impression (derived from recent conversations at St. Petersburg) is that Russia will not attempt just yet to push on any line through Afghanistan to India; but will devote her energies to completing her own communications between Moscow and Merv, and establishing railway intercourse

with Meshed. Until the Russian railway extends to Petrovsk, the Transcaspian line will still remain to a degree in the air, for the Batoum route to it would be liable to be severed in war time, and the Volga route, of course, is cut off in winter. Hence the imperative necessity for pushing the home network down to Petrovsk, and although (as I learn to-day from St. Petersburg) the Minister of Railways has wired to the capital, stopping the passage of the Vladikavkaz Petrovsk Railway Project through the committee of Ministers, until his return, I am still of opinion that this will be the route chosen At any rate either from Vladikavkaz or from Tsaritzin the railway network will be pushed down to Petrovsk without much further delay. Simultaneously with this, one of three other lines will be started,—(1) an extension from Petrovsk to Baku and Resht, to meet the Teheran line and connect the Persian capital with Europe; (2) a new railway from Gez and Asterabad to Meshed; (3) a line from the Askabad station of the Transcaspian Railway to Meshed. Despite all that is said by the *Kavkaz*, I should not be surprised if the choice of the Emperor fell upon the third railway—the one from Askabad to Meshed. It would be only a short line—less than 150 miles; but it would give Russia predominance in Khorassan, and threaten Herat and India from a new quarter—two circumstances that would justify the construction of the line, quite apart from the traffic considerations arising from the joining of so important a city as Meshed with the Transcaspian Railway. General Komaroff is most anxious to have the line constructed, and exercises all the influence he can to secure the Emperor's consent for the scheme. After this the Gez-Meshed Railway stands the best chance of being adopted—as affording a second line of advance upon India; then follows the Petrovsk-Teheran and Teheran-Gez schemes. Although a cessation of Alikhanoff's intrigues in Afghanistan is hardly to be expected, it is highly probable Russia will endeavour to complete all the railways I have mentioned, before endeavouring to come to any arrangement with England, with regard to a junction of the Russian and Indian systems. Such a junction cannot well take place without Russia specifying the limits of her advance—for although a caravan road can be easily annexed, it is not so easy for the Cossacks to grab a railway. If Russia asked England to extend the Indian system to Herat, this would be a frank avowal of her relinquishment of territorial designs on Afghanistan. Russia is not likely to do this, for once her railway communication with Meshed are complete, she will be able to render Herat difficult for either Amir or Viceroy to control, unless England wisely pushed on a railway to Herat while Russia's hands are, to a certain extent, tied in Europe, and several links in the Moscow-Meshed line of communications remain incomplete.

THE TRANSCASPIAN RAILWAY AND THE "TIMES" CORRESPONDENT.

LONDON, *August 17th, 1888.*

THE Russian Government seems determined to keep the Transcaspian Railway before the eyes of Europe. Among those who attended the opening of the line was Gospodin N. N. Karazine, the Russian artist, and he has returned with a portfolio of sketches which are to be reproduced in Paris by the Goupil firm (now Boussod Veladon and Co.), under the auspices of the Russian Government, at the cost of £8,000 or £10,000. No doubt the sketches are well worth reproduction, for Karazine is a wonderfully clever artist, and in his time must have turned out thousands of admirable sketches of Central Asian life ; but it is curious to contrast the readiness with which Russia, at a moment when she is supposed to be financially embarrassed, puts down £10,000 on top of the heavy cost of the Transcaspian line, while England in a sneaking sort of way, is raising a little money by the sale of the remnants of the Suakin-Berber Railway and desert water pipe line rusting under the shanties in Plumstead marches. As an engineering exploit there never was anything remarkable about the Transcaspian Railway. Only vanity can cause General Annenkoff to consider himself a second Lesseps. But he certainly deserves the fullest credit as the originator of the short overland route to India through Russia. The idea was solely and exclusively his own, and he received nothing but ridicule and abuse when he first made it known to the Russian Government and public. Even Skobeleff attached no value to it at the outset, and when I discussed the future of the railway with him in 1882, he referred to Annenkoff in terms which I thought had better not be published. He would hardly allow him any credit in connection with the Geok Tepe campaign. All the same, Annenkoff fought on. As Director of Military Transport in Russia, and a wealthy man as well, he possessed considerable influence, which he exercised to the utmost on behalf of his pet scheme. Yet a pamphlet he wrote on the matter fell flat in Russia, and I myself incurred ridicule when I drew attention to his ideas in a pamphlet, "The Russian Railway to Herat and India," and issued 1,000 copies, with Annenkoff's map, to Parliament and the Press. The discovery by Lessar of the easy road to Herat gave the idea a fresh impulse, and, as soon as Merv was annexed, the future of the line was assured. Annenkoff received orders to extend it from Kizil Arvat to Askabad, and thence to Merv ; after which he had to set on foot a fresh official agitation, resulting, in spite of the opposition of the Minister of

Finance, &c., in the permission to carry it on to Samarkhand. It is true that his chief idea—that of pushing the line down to Quetta—has not yet been realised; but, sooner or later, it is certain that a junction will take place of the Russian and Indian lines, and in the meanwhile General Annenkoff has done his best to bring this about by his success in persuading the Russian Government, after much pressure and argument, to put down the line from the Caspian to Samarkhand.

This week the General has been gazetted "Director" of the Railway. As the *Gazette* specifies that he is to "retain his present appointments," which are, of course, of considerably greater importance, the decree is evidently intended to keep the line under his charge until the Government makes up its mind whether to place it under State control or not. The bulk of the railways in Russia are managed by public companies. There are, however, several thousand miles of line managed by the State, and the present tendency is to place all weak railways under the State, and ultimately to render the railway system a Government monopoly. The Transcaspian Railway belongs to neither category It was not constructed by the Ministry of Railways but by the War Office, and the latter is not disposed, at the hour of triumph, to hand it over to a department which always cavilled at and pooh-poohed the undertaking. In time, no doubt, the Minister of War will get tired of the burden. In the meanwhile there obviously could not be a better controller of the administrative affairs of the line at St Petersburg than General Annenkoff, its constructor The selection of the local officials will fall to him, and he will doubtless make his influence felt on the discussions that will arise in time as to the extension of the line, whether to Tashkent, Meshed, or Herat.

Somewhat tardily, the *Times* has begun to publish this week the series of letters it must have received some time ago from the special correspondent it detailed off to describe the opening of the Samarkhand Railway. These promise to be valuable, the author being no other than Mr. Dobson, long the accurate and energetic correspondent of the *Times* at St. Petersburg. Sir West Ridgeway, in his *Nineteenth Century* article of last October, was ill-mannerly and unfair enough to describe Mr. Dobson as a "Russian" and a "boy." Mr. Dobson is neither. He already possessed journalistic knowledge when he went to Russia many years ago a youth, and after learning Russian proved of great assistance to Mr. Schuyler in preparing his well-known "Turkistans." Subsequently, having acted as correspondent of several papers he became the representative of the *Times*. When the war of 1876 broke out, Mr. Dobson asked permission to go to Bulgaria as "special" with the Russian army. This was refused, the *Times*

pinning its faith upon military correspondents, upon which he threw up his appointment and went to the Danube as a free lance. It was this evacuation of the St. Petersburg post that led to Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace being sent thither, and paved the way for the journalistic career of the latter in Russia, Turkey, and Egypt. After a while the *Times'* correspondents at the seat of war getting disabled or dispersed, the *Times* was only too glad to avail itself of Mr. Dobson again, and he represented the paper throughout the Plevna and other stirring episodes of the war, forming a frendship with Skobeleff which lasted until the latter's death, and many acquaintances with the leading Russian military men, which have proved invaluable since. The war over, Mr. Dobson was re-appointed *Times'* correspondent at St. Petersburg, and has participated in all the important political events there up to the present time. When the inauguration of the Transcaspian Railway was announced, he was specially ordered off to describe the undertaking.

The position of correspondent at St. Petersburg is not an easy one. In most other capitals news agencies exist for the collection of information, and the press is always on the *qui vive*. A correspondent at Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and even Constantinople, therefore, is scarcely ever caught napping. The case is quite different at St. Petersburg Correspondents there have to hunt for their own news, and must be always, day and night, on the alert. For instance, a Nihilist plot is suddenly discovered, or an attack is made upon the life of an official on Sunday. The London Press wants the news, of course, for Monday morning. But the St. Petersburg newspapers are quite content to publish it on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday, and their readers are not in the least impatient, even if it is held over for a week. Meanwhile, unless a correspondent happen to know an official connected with the discovery of the plot, or chance to pass the spot where the attempt was made upon the life of the functionary, he remains in utter ignorance until he comes in contact with the buzzing of a rumour. Then he has to track the rumour to its source, and collect all the details, which in a less barbarous country would be collected by the reporters of the great papers or the emissaries of the news agencies. No one can realise what a trying life this implies. The English correspondents at St. Petersburg have to be always on the move. Morning, noon, and night they must be dodging about the Capital visiting this and the other persons, and loitering in the feeding-rooms of cafés and hotels, and are never certain, the moment they slacken their activity, that something will not occur concentrating the eyes of Europe upon Russia. As might be expected in a capital where the collection of news is in such a mediæval condition, rumour is rampant and leads the correspondents incessantly on a wild goose chase. Then when the news is bagged, a fresh difficulty

arises in sending it over the wires. The telegraph authorities will think nothing of keeping over a despatch two or three days, or the censor of cutting thirty lines down to three, or even, indeed, of falsifying the message altogether. Finally, after the news has reached England and has been published, the Minister of this, that, or the other in Russia may be offended when he sees it in print, and may administer the correspondent a "wigging.' If one adds to this the impatience of a British editor, who ignoring all the conditions I have cited, demands the fullest details to be sent immediately over the wire, and throws into the waste-paper basket any written accounts subsequently sent (although the latter really contains the reliable version), it will be seen that the life of a St. Petersburg correspondent is a dreadfully harassing one. It is, in fact, the life of a dog, and I wouldn't occupy it for the salary of the Viceroy of India.

All the more credit, therefore, attaches to Mr. Dobson for having held his own against all obstacles so long, and managed to be unswervingly patriotic while retaining the respect of the Russians. It is notorious, for instance, that Mr. Lowe, the *Times*' correspondent at Berlin, only maintains his post by always lauding the Teutons. The Germans will allow no hostile foreign journalistic critics at Berlin. Unfortunately it so happens that Mr. Lowe is a rabid German, so that British interests are sacrificed to the advocacy of German interests, and great harm is done to English policy. Prince Bismarck literally controls the Berlin section of the *Times*. Quite the reverse is the case with Mr. Dobson at St. Petersburg. He is neither a Russophobic fanatic of the Ashmead-Bartlett description, nor an ignorant Russophile of the Lansdell type. He has a wide circle of Russian friends by whom he is beloved, and he never telegraphs anything that might be constructed into a wanton attack on their feelings. All the same, he watches vigilantly England's interests, and if more telegrams, and longer ones, do not appear in the *Times*, it is simply due to the censor conditions I have referred to and to the refusal of the *Times* to publish any Russian news except of special interest. Every year the *Times* wastes more of its Russian telegrams than it inserts.

Reuter's supply of news from St. Petersburg is meagre, managed by Russian officials, and not to be depended upon. All the more value, therefore, attaches to the carefully collected news which Mr. Dobson sends home, and which is the only reliable supply at the present juncture. During my visits to Russia, I have had many opportunities of seeing him at work, and my regret has always been that the capacity and energy he possesses should have been wasted on the thankless task of collecting news the bulk of which never sees the light. Up to now he

has not turned his attention to political literature, but has recently commenced a "Life of Prince Gortschakoff" for Messrs. Allen's *Eminent Statesmen* series. This promises to be an important and interesting work, as Mr. Dobson not only knew the Chancellor, but is acquainted with members of his family, official friends and official foes, and between them and the information placed at his disposition by the Russian Government he will be able to turn out a a capital book. The chief difficulty will be to compress the matter into a couple of hundred pages, and it is by no means improbable that a larger biography will appear in due course, or else the surplus materials will be incorporated in a history of the Eastern Question, which has occupied Mr. Dobson's mind some time.

The work just brought out by General Boulanger's brother, "Voyage a Merv; les Russes dans l'Asie Centrale et le Chemin de fer Transcaspien," is adversely reviewed by the *Novœ Vremya* this week. While admitting that it is well got up and is very complimentary to Russia, the *Novœ Vremya* says that it will "only interest the ordinary reader." From a scientific point of view it is most unsatisfactory, and anybody who was not an engineer could have written it just as well.

Whether Azoun Ada or Krasnovodsk shall be the Caspian starting of the Transcaspian Railway is still being deliberated by the commission appointed at St. Petersburg a few months ago, and its decision is not expected until the middle of September.

THE "TIMES" AND THE TRANSCASPIAN RAILWAY.

LONDON, *August 31st, 1888.*

THE *Times* has continued publishing this week the admirable letters of its St. Petersburg correspondent on the Transcaspian Railway, which shed a flood of light upon the recent operations of Russia in the Turcoman region. In this respect they differ from those which the Rev. J. Lansdell has been publishing in the *Manchester Guardian*. The author of "Through Siberia" is utterly ignorant of Russ; he is never well served by his interpreters, who get bored to death by his interminable questioning and become careless or indifferent after a while: and for the most part he mixes only with Russian officials of influence, the seamy side of whose character he never describes in his books. If one can imagine a Frenchman coming to London ignorant of English and writing a book on England, without reading a single English book or newspaper, without

mixing with the people or living with them in their homes, and without in the least trying to place himself on a footing with their feelings, being content to take his views of English life from a score, or a couple of score, of French-speaking persons of the official or aristocratic circles he will have a very good idea of Mr. Lansdell's methods of studying Russia. Thus his description of the Transcaspian Railway is that of a mere cosmopolitan tourist, anxious not to say anything disagreeable about officials who have given him a cheap ride and a cheap feed to-day, and whom he may perhaps require to give him another cheap ride and cheap feed to-morrow. His letters only admit one thing and admit it tersely—the Transcaspian line is not "thoroughly" built; but why the thoroughness is absent is either purposely concealed by him, or because, as is more probably the case, his ignorance of Russia prevented him from ascertaining the causes from those who knew the local history of the line. This and other blanks Mr. Dobson fills in. Instead of sticking to some high personage like a leech, and adhering until some other prey loomed in sight, as is a characteristic of Mr. Lansdell, the *Times'* correspondent travelled and mixed with all manner of Russians on the way to Samarkhand; he discussed the railway with the enemies and the friends of General Annenkoff as well as with that personage himself; and the result is a series of interesting letters that remind one of Schuyler, and will cause the St. Petersburg censor a good deal of anxiety as to what ought or ought not to be suppressed.

At first sight it might seem that Mr. Dobson's exposure would do harm to General Annenkoff. With the candour that was a characteristic of Mr. Schuyler (Mr. Dobson partly received his literary training at the hands of the author of "Turkistan"), the *Times'* correspondent shows the Transcaspian Railway to be very badly built, to be more or less scamped throughout, and to be, in one word, quite an engineering farce in regard to permanent-way, stations, and rolling-stock. He tells us of a verst, or two-thirds of a mile, of rails being laid in thirty minutes, of grandiloquently named railway stations of the size of sentry-boxes, and of railway carriages compared with which the gipsy caravans of old England are Pulman cars. Thanks to the cheap and rapid construction, so little sound work is put into the line that streams are allowed to bore their own culverts through the embankments; and this they do in such a summary fashion sometimes that a mile or two of rails disappear in the desert, to puzzle perhaps the archæologist of the 20th century, who may construe on their discovery then that the Turcomans knew about railroads long before the Russian conquest. Meanwhile, upon Mr. Dobson's description, some of the "masterly inactivity scoffers" in India may also build the theory that the Transcaspian Railway is a

very poor thing and a failure, and that England need entertain no fear of its being the slightest value to Russia in any march upon Herat and Candahar. As, from what I know of Mr. Dobson's sentiments, this would be the very last view he would desire to encourage, I will attempt to explain a little more fully what he describes "behind the scenes" with respect to the inception and construction of the railway, and indicate the benefit he has conferred on General Annenkoff by exposing its defects.

In the first place, the railway is by no means a farce like the Persian line at Teheran. By starting the Resht-Teheran line at the Caspian instead of conveying the rails on camels' backs two hundred miles to Teheran in order to start at the capital, the Shah might have built the mileage already opened at £4,000 or £5,000 instead of £10,000 a mile. This was simply fooling the difference away. In the case of Russia, however, the Transcaspian Railway, is all badly built, not because there has been any tomfoolery, or any particular waste or corruption, but because Annenkoff has not spent upon it that time and money without which no line can be properly laid. Unless war early intervenes, both time and money will be forthcoming, and the present rough line will become a thorough-built railway. Most probably this eventuality will be accomplished in a couple of years, perhaps earlier. Then, when as much has been spent on it as on other Russian lines, it will become as good as they are.

But would it not have been cheaper and better to have constructed a sound, solid, dearer line at the outset? No, most decidedly not—from the standpoint of General Annenkoff. Other projectors had proposed tying Central Asia to Russia by railway, but the vastness of the outlay had always frightened the Government. Annenkoff saw the excellence of the Merv-Chardjui route. He joined the noble army of projectors. His idea was to connect the Caucasus, the Caspian base, Transcaspia, and Turkistan at a stroke, and at the same time threaten Herat and open up a new European route to India. The Ministry of Railways reluctantly devoted its attention to the investigation of this idea, and drew up a plan of a railway which frightened the Government into fits, so great was the expenditure of time and money involved. Had Annenkoff been less brilliant and more "thorough," the locomotive might yet have been sticking at Askabad. But he knew that his idea was a good one; and, what was more, he knew that the only way to shove it through was to impress the Emperor with what he could do personally in the way of speed and cheapness. So he put in an estimate that would have amazed the smartest jerry builder in England; and he offered, with soldiers alone, to construct the line with a rapidity that should

startle not only Russia but Europe as well. Thanks to this audacity he gained the Tzar's consent. Of course, his enemies were enraged, and all the railway engineers were against him; but he carried the thing through and secured Russia such prestige, by linking Samarkhand with Europe, that the Emperor is now quite ready to advance any further sums that may be required to put the railway in proper trim. So far, therefore, from the *Times'* letters doing Annenkoff harm, they will probably do him good, for the Emperor—who reads the *Times*—will make it a point of honour (the Tzar is deeply patriotic) on the part of Russia to improve the line; and even if this involved taking it from under military control (supervised by Annenkoff) and placing it under the charge of the Ministry of Railway the prestige of the idea and its realisation would always rest with Annenkoff. Sooner or later, as I explained the other day, the line is bound to come under the control of the Minister of Railways, Admiral Possiette, and no one knows this better than Annenkoff himself. Once Possiette takes it over, the very enmity that exists between him and Annenkoff will cause him to make the line a good one, if only to show Russia how superior the supervision of the Railway Department is to that of the War Office. In this manner the Transcaspian Railway will become a properly equipped line, shedding by degrees all the defects so well described by the graphic pen of Mr. Dobson.

The chief impulse to improvement, however, will not come from Annenkoff, or from the Railway Department, but from Russian commerce. If the line were purely a military one, I should side with those who are laughing at it. But there is no fact I have tried more to lay stress on in my writings than the fact that the Russian advance is a material as well as a military one. Russia is expanding towards India just as England in South Africa is expanding towards the Zambesi, or in Canada towards Manitoba and the North-West. One hears a good deal from military men about the tens of thousands of Russian soldiers Russia sends as recruits to the Caucasus and Turkistan, but nothing of the tens of thousands of peasants who migrate thither every summer. Politicians talk of the revolution in the Russian advance accomplished by Skobeleff against Geok Tepe; but the development of Russia's petroleum industry at Baku is ignored, although it has done more to expand and consolidate Russia's material power in the Caspian than all the triumphs over the Turcomans. Similarly I look to the trade of Central Asia to bring about those improvements in the Transcaspian Railway which I have affirmed will be effected within a couple of years. Central Asian trade formerly went through Orenburg. It now flows from Tashkent, Samarkhand, Khiva and Bokhara to the Caspian Sea. The obstacles to the traffic occasioned by the defects of the line to which Mr. Dobson

refers have already led to many complaints addressed to the Government, and the Government is already taking steps to remedy them. Since Mr. Dobson's return, a ship load of rolling-stock has arrived at Azoun Ada, and other consignments of locomotives and carriages are arriving. It should not be forgotten that any deficiencies in regard to rolling-stock can be rapidly remedied whenever the Government takes the matter well in hand. In two or three weeks as many additional trains could be placed on the line as the Government wished—all that would be needed would be to place the surplus rolling-stock of the Tzaritzin, Saratoff, and other railways touching the Volga on barges (and barges of from 1,000 to 5,000 tons capacity are obtainable by hundreds on that river) and float them down to the Caspian Sea. At present the Russian merchants in Central Asia are not clamouring about the expense and delay in sending goods by the Transcaspian Railway as much as they will in a few months' time, because the railway, bad as it is, is better than the camel, to which they have been so long accustomed, and for the moment they are thankful for any small mercies. But before long, odious comparisons will be instituted, not between the camel and the railway, but between the Transcaspian Railway and other Russian lines; and then the agitation will swell until the Government takes the railway out of the charge of colonels and majors and captains and hands it over to the trained officials of the Ministry of Railways. Five years ago I traversed the Transcaucasian Railway just after the section from Tiflis to Baku was opened. There was then hardly any rolling-stock on the line, the traffic was confined to a dozen or twenty passengers, and although the line was better built than the one across the Caspian, still a very amusing article could have been written about its desolation and other defects. Yet within three years the traffic was so great that the railway could not cope with it in spite of incessant additions to its rolling-stock, and although last year over one thousand trains were again added and seventy locomotives, my Russian papers mention this morning that the sum of one-and-a-half million roubles has just been assigned for additional rolling-stock. On the 1st January next the State will take over the whole line from Batoum to Baku, and the Transcaucasian Railway Company as a private concern will cease to exist. The Transcaspian Railway, from Azoun Ada to Samarcand, is a natural continuation of the Transcaucasian line. I have a conviction that the moment the State control of the Caucasus Railway is organized, the War Office will hand over the Central Asian section to the Railway Department also.

Thus the *Times'* letters, while exposing to the fullest the weaker points of the Transcaspian Railway, do not in the least detract from its significance. Mr. Dobson does full justice to the importance of the railway in abridging the distance between Central Asia

and Europe; and if the least attempt should be made to twist his remarks into the opinion that he deems the concentration of a great Russian army in Afghanistan impossible, I take advantage of the opportunity to mention that, so far from holding this view, he entertains the most pessimist opinion respecting our ability to resist Russia at all.

The *Kavkaz* is publishing a series of energetic leaders, urging that Krasnovodsk should be made the starting point of the line instead of Azoun Ada, owing to the deep water excellence of the former port. This would involve the construction of eighty miles of additional line from Krasnovodsk to Mulla Kari. There is every probability that the idea will be adopted in due course. In the meanwhile, it is announced that a copious supply of drinking water has been obtained at Krasnovodsk by sinking artesian wells.

N. Konshin writes to the *Novoe Vremya*, denying the report that he had abandoned his intention of holding a Russian exhibition at Teheran. The opening has been postponed because goods have been delayed on the road. Although receiving no pecuniary aid from the Russian Government, he is supported by the Mission at Teheran.

It is reported that negotiations are in progress between Russia and Persia with a view to defining which shall exercise suzerainty over the Yomud Turcomans roaming from one side of the Asterabad frontier to the other. Russia wishes to make subjects of them all.

THE "TIMES," THE TRANSCASPIAN RAILWAY, AND PENJDEH.

LONDON, *October 5th, 1888.*

THE *Times* is blowing its trumpet a little too lustily over Mr. Dobson's letters on the Transcaspian Railway. Every other letter has a laudatory leader tacked on to it, and yesterday's might have fitly been applied to some such exploit as Arminius Vambery's dervish wanderings to Samarkhand instead of to an ordinary journey to Central Asia in a railway carriage. "If," said the *Times*, among other things, "our St. Petersburg correspondent had the amiable desire of provoking envy by his account, he may be congratulated on complete success. A large number of Englishmen will have followed his course on paper with the keenest regret that they could not have put themselves in his place. Legations, Consulates, and Ministries have been beseiged" (*sic*—say about half-a-dozen

applications all told) "with supplications for leave to make the tour. When, if ever, the petitions will be granted nobody knows, and least of all they to whom they are addressed." This is very pretty, but it is chiefly gas. It conveys the impression that Mr. Dobson is the Marco Polo of the *Times*; and that the Russian Government, having specially opened the doors of Central Asia for a *Times'* correspondent to walk in, has specially closed them again to keep all other competing intruders out. Mr. Dobson has in reality seen nothing (barring a bit here and there of the railway) that had not been seen before, and so far from being the only Englishman present, three or four performed the journey about the same time, and thirty or forty might have equally obtained permission had they been on the spot at St Petersburg or Baku. The whole affair of the refusals to Mr. Curzon, Colonel Talbot, and others arose from General Annenkoff's unauthorised and indiscreet attempt to secure international notoriety by running a sort of swell Cook's excursion from Paris to Samarkhand. Annenkoff has only managed to make his railway by making many enemies in the Russian administration and hence they sat upon him by professing ignorance of the Paris affair and withholding permits from all to proceed to Central Asia. No question of deep policy was involved. It was simply a matter of personal spite, and to gratify that spite the Russian officials cared no more for the wailings of Mr. Curzon, M. P., and the stormings of Colonel Talbot, than they did for the expostulations and maledictions of General Annenkoff himself. So far from there being any special privilege in the case of the *Times*, any other paper could have been represented had it cared sufficiently for the topic. The Russian Government dawdled in giving permission to Mr. Dobson to cross the Caspian, because for ten years a prohibition had existed against allowing Englishmen to enter Central Asia without special leave (a prohibition readily understood if one tries to realise a Russian's views of Burnaby's pranks in Khiva), and the Russian Government had not made up its mind whether, with the opening of the Transcaspian route, to rescind the prohibition or not. This state of indecision still exists, and explains the dawdling in the case of Mr. Dobson's would-be successors. Mr. Dobson, fearful of being too late, started without a permission, trusting to his many Russian friends to get it for him before he arrived at the point where a permit would be required—Azoun Ada. Had a score or two other applications been made about the same time they would have been considered together, and in all probability a free permission granted in every case. But when Annenkoff began to invite all the world to go to Central Asia, and Mr. Dobson began exposing in the *Times* the shams of the Transcaspian line, the Russian Government was bound to consider the expediency of letting into Turkistan a swarm

of prying, criticising foreigners. Hence it is by no means unlikely that it will enforce the use of a special permit to travel in Transcaspia for a year or two longer; above all in the case of caustic critics like Mr. Dobson.

The attempt of the *Times* to plant laurels upon its own brow because, at the outside estimate, it has spent about £100 in sending its St. Petersburg correspondent to Samarkhand, gives one an idea of what the organ of Printing House Square considers journalistic enterprise. If one looks back upon the dark period of Transcaspian history from 1878 to 1885, when the public desire for reliable news about the Russian operations in the Turcoman regions was intense, it is impossible not to feel that on many an occasion the presence of such a man as Mr. Dobson on the Perso-Turcoman confines would have been invaluable. The *Times*, at that time, however, never concerned itself about news from that region in the least. It was left for a newspaper which did not believe in the Russian advance—the *Daily News*—to spend thousands of pounds in maintaining a special correspondent in that quarter. The services Mr. O'Donovan rendered by his famous ride to Merv were invaluable. Yet the *Daily News* made less fuss over its own enterprise in sending Mr. O'Donovan to Merv at the expense of thousands of pounds than the *Times* is making over Mr. Dobson's tourist trip at the cost of a hundred pound note. Even when the Lumsden Mission proceeded to the Afghan frontier, the *Times* sent no "special," contenting itself with a few occasional letters, "on the cheap," from the members of the Mission. One has only to compare those letters with Mr. Dobson's to realise the difference between the work of a trained journalist, paid well to work well, and the amateur contributions of officials fearful of revealing too much, unable to criticise the operations in hand, and making up for these and other shortcomings by applying unlimited laudation all round. Major E. E. Yate and others travelled from the Oxus to the Caspian by the new railway, and the former "described" it in his recently issued work "Northern Afghanistan." Whether he was really incapable of describing it, or felt himself precluded from doing so, I will not attempt to discuss; but it is certainly a fact that Major Yate's account of the line bears the same proportion to Mr. Dobson's as an empty egg shell to a full grown chicken.

The *Times*' correspondent in describing Alikhanoff's home at Merv, mentions the existence there of a trophy in the shape of a "good breech-loading fowling piece which had belonged to Major Yate or Major Peacock," he was "not certain which, taken after the disastrous and *discreditable* flight of the British representatives at the battle of the Kooshk." He also mentions the trophy at Askabad—the Afghan cannon captured at Penjdeh, placed round

the base of the Skoboleff monument at Askabad—and the articles exhibited by General Komaroff, such as an Indian helmet, etc. Major Yate, who has much to say about the good feeding he received at the hands of Alikhanoff and Komaroff, makes no mention in his book of these unpleasant trophies. I don't think a hero of the Burnaby, MacGregor, Napier, or other well-known English type would have wanted much dinner with such skeletons at the feast. Better a long march and an empty stomach than a champagne dinner with the reminder of an ignominious defeat. Kind as Alikhanoff and Komaroff were to Mr. Dobson one sight of these trophies made him wince. This feeling will be all the more readily understood by those who have happened to live much in Russia. The cathedrals, churches, and military museums of St. Petersburg and Moscow are crowded with flags taken from the enemy. There must be some thousands of them displayed in the two capitals, French, Polish, German, Austrian, Hungarian, Turkish, Tartar, etc., etc. Hundreds of guns also decorate the public squares and thoroughfares. But among the guns not a single English one is to be found, and among the flags only two—one, a boat flag captured during the massacre at Hangho, and the other a boat flag that floated ashore with the Tiger on the Crimean Coast. English residents in Russia are proud of this absence of English trophies, and therefore it galls them to read of the guns exposed at Askabad. Of course the two Yates have professed to treat in their books the Penjdeh affair as a purely Afghan defeat; and their happy ignorance of Russian has, perhaps, contributed to establish this feeling of equanimity in their mind; but it is certainly a fact that in Russia the Penjdeh stampede is looked upon as an English defeat, and when the *Times*' correspondent uses the words "disastrous and discreditable flight of the English representatives," he simply states without disguise what Alikhanoff and Komaroff in Trans-caspia and Russian officials think and say in regard to the conduct of those English officers who were present at Penjdeh. Whether Major Yate acted rightly or wrongly at Penjdeh is a matter outside their remarks, but it is simply a matter of ordinary notoriety in Russia that his conduct there is regarded by Russian military men as weak and ignoble, and that, in a word, they look upon him as having completely left the poor Afghans in the lurch. Had Russian officers been in the place of Yate and his companions, they would either have managed that no fighting took place at all, or would have headed the Afghans. The cold, unpassionate survey of the fight from the safe spot, and, when all was lost, the stampede with dry sabres—these are features of the Penjdeh affair which Russian officers, without seeking to cast any slur on the bravery and hot spirit of English military men generally, candidly confess

their inability to understand. The Russian press comments on . affair are never pleasant reading. "A couple more Penjdehs and Maiwands, and where would be British rule in India?" demanded a St. Petersburg newspaper the other day.

It is interesting to note that while the English press for the most part treat the Transcaspian line as a purely local railway, the Russian press look upon it as the future highway to India. For instance, the *Neva*, an extremely popular non-political weekly illustrated paper, is publishing a whole series of excellent sketches of the line and country by the artist Karazine, who has just returned from there, under the title of "On the Road to India" A Russophobist would doubtless detect in this one more piece of evidence of Russia's historical determination to invade India; but it really simply shows how more clearly Russians appreciate the progress of events in Central Asia than we do. Russians generally assimilate new ideas far more rapidly than Englishmen. In spite of all that has been written on the subject few Englishmen have got as far yet as to expect that India will be joined to Europe by a railway in their lifetime. On the other hand, the Russians look upon it as simply a matter of two or three years. While the British public still mixes and muddles the vast steppes and deserts of Turkestan and the lofty passes of the Hindu Koosh with the short routes and easy roads of the region between Merv and Quetta, the Russians thoroughly understand the insignificance of the Afghan barrier, and are convinced that at no distant date the overland trade of India must again traverse the Caspian on its way to Europe.

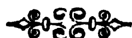
A curious piece of information reaches me from Baku. The Russian authorities have ordered four Guebres from India, at present in Bokhara, to be sent by the new railway to Baku, in order that they may revive the worship of the "eternal fires" there. It is a well-known fact that in distant ages Baku was the Mecca of the fire-worshippers, and, until a few years ago, there was still a solitary Guebre to be seen tending at Surakhani the sacred fire that had been burning, at an altar for countless generations. This fire-worshipper was murdered for the savings he was believed to possess, and the altar was allowed to fall to pieces. Whether the Russian Government is simply inviting the four Guebres from Bokhara to amuse the Tzar while at Baku, or means astutely to permanently revive the fire worship, in order to attract the Parsees from Bombay and establish useful political relation with Indian subjects, I am unable for the moment to say, but the incident is one that is well worth watching.

It is probably not quite forgotten that Alikhanoff made his first survey of Merv disguised as a clerk, accompanying a caravan which

Gospodin Kosikh conducted thither from Askabad. Kosikh made a pile of money in Transcaspia during this period, and is now at St. Petersburg endeavouring to secure the support of the Minister of Finance for a scheme for establishing commercial relations between Samarkhand, Teheran, Batoum, Constantinople, Bombay, and Calcutta, I hear also of a movement on the part of several Russian mercantile houses at Odessa to open offices at Bombay. The despatch of Russian kerosine from Batoum to Bombay and the increase in the export of tea from India to Odessa are causing Russian merchants to discuss the possibilities of a trade with India direct, without the intervention of England.

With regard to the conflict in Afghan-Turkistan, very little that is noteworthy has been published this week by the Russian press. Of course Russians are very pleased at the conflict which tends to weaken Afghanistan, but few newspapers advocate any open interference in the affair. That it will end without any complication is, however. not expected at St. Petersburg, where it is pointed out that even if Ishak Khan be thoroughly defeated a swarm of refugees are likely to cross the frontier to seek an asylum in Russia and the internment of these is bound to be a subject for the diplomatists. Some of these fugitives may prove excellent tools for Alikhanoff to play with. Hitherto he has only had Turcomans for pawns, but a few Afghan notables would be better pieces for that clever intriguer, and unless they were interned far away from the frontier, there is very little doubt that he would make an effective use of them.

A friend who has just come back from Merv, after ample opportunities of seeing the private side of Alikhanoff's character, assures me that he is decidedly the strongest and the cleverest Russian in the whole Transcaspian territory. He is a man of great ambition, and he is determined to make a career for himself if he can. As a career can only be made at the expense of Afghanistan and Persia—a fact which Alikhanoff takes no pains to conceal—it is clear that his presence at Merv is a very unsatisfactory feature of the present situation in Central Asia. Komaroff, in comparison, is looked upon as altogether out of the running. He may come to the front in connection with Meshed ; but the rising sun of the Transcaspian world is Alikanoff, and that favourite is rapidly rendering his position all-powerful at Merv, and extending his influence outside it as far as he can,



THE TZAR IN THE CAUCASUS AND LUMSDEN ON PENJDEH.



LONDON, *October 12th, 1888.*

THE Tzar has arrived this week at Tiflis, and accomplished half his journey in the Caucasus. The telegrams in the Russian papers describe his progress as being a brilliant success. Proceeding from the Crimea to Rostoff, on the Don, he travelled by rail to Vladikavkaz, where he received deputations from the various cis-Caucasian tribes, and accepted bread and salt from the representatives of the Russian peasant communities in the Stavropol plains, who now quite outnumber the old Asiatic tribal population. From Vladikavkaz a short journey through the Dariel Pass would have taken the Imperial party to Tiflis; but the Tzar chose a different and more roundabout route, returning by rail as far as Ekaterinodar, the administrative centre of the Kuban Cossacks; then proceeding over the New railway to the new port of Novorossisk. Here he embarked on the Moskva, and, escorted by the first squadron Russia has placed on the Black Sea since the Crimean War, made his way to Batoum, from which point he journeyed by rail again to the capital of the Caucasus. At Ekaterinodar the Kuban Cossacks turned out in force, and displayed eighty standards, all representative of the triumphs the Kuban Cossacks have achieved since they were first formed to keep the Caucasus in order. Combining the best elements of the Slav with those of the Caucasian (the Cossacks for generations mated with Caucasian wives), the Kuban Cossacks are perhaps the finest men in the Russian Empire. The Emperor was greatly pleased with the variety of interesting relics displayed. At Novorossisk, which was a mere fishing village, unheard of during the last war, he inspected the new port, which in time is to be rendered a first-class naval station, and reviewed the local battalion and twenty-eight sotnyas of various Cossack regiments. Thanks to the new railway Russia can throw any force she chooses into this corner of the Black Sea, where it would prove an awkard factor for those vainglorious English strategists who, quite unmindful of the complete swamping of the old hostile tribal elements by the swarming Russian settlers, still talk in a Rip Van Winkle strain of a "rising in the Caucasus" next time England and Russia go to war. Such heedless Trochus are apparently quite ignorant of the great military wagon road the Russians have cut from Ekaterinodar to Soukhum Kale,

thanks to which any future landing in Trans-Caucasia would be a risky matter for an invader.

The squadron assembled in Novorossisk Bay to convey the Emperor to Batoum must have brought home to him how rapidly Russia's power is rising in the Black Sea. It comprised, in the first place, the two new heavy ironclads *Catherine the Second* and *Tchesme,* vessels with 18 inches of armour and six 12-inch guns, engines of 11,500 horse-power, steaming at 15 knots, and capable, as calculations go, of overtaking and sinking the whole Turkish fleet. Then there were five new corvettes—the *Kubanetz, Uraletz, Tchoronomorez, Teretz* and *Zaporojets*—all rapid steaming vessels and carrying guns not only more powerful than any Turkish corvette, but also than most of the Turkish ironclads. These seven vessels have all been constructed within the last few years. The remaining three were the cruisers *Moscow*, the *Pamiat Mercury*, and *Eriklik.* The whole ten managed to find ample room in that part of Batoum which Lord Beaconsfield, in his memorable apology for surrendering it to Russia, declared could only accommodate "seven ironclads." The Emperor, during his stay, examined the extensive works in progress for enlarging the port, the new batteries defending Batoum, and the large series of reservoirs which now often contain more than 30,000,000 gallons of oil at one time. The Russians took over the place as a miserable delapidated Turkish port of two or three thousand inhabitants. There are now 15,000 in the place, which has been almost entirely rebuilt, and its commercial progress will probably be even more rapid than that of Odessa, a great city, seemingly old, ranking fourth in the Empire, and yet which has only just celebrated its hundreth birthday. Plan as we may against Russia's military progress in the south and east, we cannot hope to make the slightest headway against the material progress the Emperor has witnessed everywhere in his tour. The laying of the foundation of a new orthodox cathedral at Batoum was one more reminder to Europe of the advance of the Russo-Greek religion into a region only a few years ago the hot-bed of fanatic Mahomedanism.

The news of the defeat of Ishak Khan is very disappointing for the Russians. The *Novœ Vremya*, of the 6th, however, which I have just received, seeks consolation in the face that the Amir is in bad health and in bad odour with many tribes, and can hardly hope to transmit a quiet heritage to his successor. "Sooner or later," the article concludes "the Indian Government will recognize that the political buffer it has raised is both unreliable and costly. The present condition of the country is detrimental not only to the trade of Russia but of England also. Would it not be better to seriously think a little about the pacification of Afghanistan,

even though by means of a partition, the more so since a clear ethnographical as well as a geographical one can perhaps be defined?"

General Annenkoff has been entertained at a splendid banquet by the merchants of Moscow this week. In a brief speech he dilated on the commercial advantages of the Transcaspian railway. According to a Tiflis paper State Councillor Zabagin, Vice-Director of the Department of Customs Receipts, has arrived at Askabad to organize the frontier revenue service in the Transcaspian territory.

I referred last week to the *Times*' correspondent's description of the Penjdeh trophies at Merv and Askabad. In yesterday's *Times* appeared a letter from Sir Peter Lumsden poohpoohing the trophies, and "emphatically contradicting the imputations on the character of the British officers attached to the Afghan Boundary Commission" contained in the words of the correspondent—" trophies taken after the disastrous and discreditable flight of the British representatives at the battle of Koushk."

It is a matter of common notoriety to those who read my "Russians at the Gates of Herat," and followed my press and platform campaign in 1885, that I did my utmost to sustain the reputation of the Lumsden Mission, and defended it from the lying attacks of O. K., Mr. Stead, and the Russian party in London. No one therefore can accuse me, from my writings or lectures, of any animus against Sir Peter Lumsden in the remarks I am going to make. So far as the trophies are concerned, they evidently, from the Russian illustrations I have of them, belonged more to the Afghan than British Commission; but this does not in the least deprive them of their character as unquestionable memorials of an affair which will, I believe, always stink in the nostrils of English posterity, notwithstanding the attempts of Captain Yate, etc., to treat it as a purely "Afghan" defeat. When, however, Sir Peter Lumsden touches upon the flight of the Commission he deals with an historical fact, respecting which not only Russian evidence, but English also, is at total variance with his statements.

He says: "So far from *flight;* Captain Yate *retired* with his baggage in the most orderly manner." The distinction seems to me quite Gladstonian, and will be certainly accepted as such in Russia. Colonel Alikhanoff happens to have a very complete library of the latest English books on the Russo-Indian question; among them, I believe, the book written by Captain Yate's own brother, "The Afghan Boundary Commission," containing an account of the battle written a few days after the affair. In this Lieutenant A. C. Yate speaks of "commissariat stores and one or two tents" being left

behind, together with a poor wretch of a "cook belonging to Captain de Laessoe, who was stripped by the Cossacks ;" and he apologises for this abandonment on the grounds that it was "very litte use saving kit at the risk of life." "Giving out that they were going to Maruchak," the English party seven miles from Penjdeh quitted the road, and took quite the opposite direction across the hills towards Kalah-i-maur, passing a most miserable night in the wet, and hurrying on at daylight to Chaman-i-bed, which was reached after thirty hours of almost continuous marching. A plain spoken man, after reading Lieutenant Yate's account, would term this a flight. But this is only the first act of the affair. As soon as the Penjdeh party reached Gulran, Sir Peter Lumsden decided on falling back on Tirpul, and this movement Yate himself heads with the title, "The *Retreat* of the Five Hundred to Tirpul." On the way the Mission got caught in a snow storm. There was a regular stampede, and for miles the snow was strewn with abandoned baggage, mules, and dead bodies of wretched camp followers. The baggage was looted, twenty-four camp followers perished in the snow, and a hundred baggage animals were lost. Sir Peter Lumsden may deny as much as he likes that these two movements—Yate's hurried racing in a false direction across country, and his own rush from Gulran—did not constitute what the *Times'* correspondent calls a "disastrous flight" from Penjdeh, but he will never get the general public in this country, let alone the Russians, to believe him. It is mere Gladstonian juggling with words to term it an "orderly retirement" instead of a flight.

As for the other adjective, "discreditable" flight, of course, is a pure matter of opinion. The Russians think we left the Afghans in the lurch in the most ignoble manner ; and I cannot help confessing that I share this opinion of the affair. Penjdeh being the most menaced point of the frontier, just then Sir Peter Lumsden's proper place was there, not in the rear at Gulran, and most of my Russian military friends maintain that had he been there with his mission, Alikhanoff would have never been tempted to make the attack. It was a mistake to throw the whole blunt of the responsibility on a young officer of limited weight and experience, and if Yate followed his chief in not rising to the occasion it was a painful reminder to England that not all her sons are cast in a heroic mould. Sir Peter Lumsden speaks with disgust of the whole affair as "wretched business," and throws the entire blame upon Mr. Gladstone. That is poor comfort for England. The Duke of Wellington when in Spain was harassed for years by the political imbecility and the military antagonism of the authorities at home. Yet the Peninsular War is one we can read with pride. Had other men been on the spot, animated by the firm conviction that the frontier attacked was not merely an Afghan frontier but the frontier

of the Empire, and determined to patriotically defend it with their lives, the Penjdeh affair might have had a very different ending. As it was, Penjdeh was simply a Khartoum without Gordon.

A Russian correspondent, in describing the presentation of the Turcoman deputation to the Emperor at Baku, says that the Tekkes gave the Heir Apparent, as a gift from the tribe, the gold sword taken from the ill-fated commander of the Persian Expedition in 1861. In that year the Shah despatched 25,000 troops against the Tekkes of Merv, the force comprising 12,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry, and 33 guns. Through cowardice and incapacity the Persians were overcome, and those who escaped death were sold into slavery in Bokhara. The gold sword of the General, encrusted with jewels, having remained a trophy at Merv up to now, and escaped the cupidity of the Russian officials there, has now become the property of the Heir Apparent. The Empress was presented with eight costly Turcoman carpets and the Emperor with a silver salver made at Moscow. The celebrated chieftainess Gul Djamel, whose influence contributed largely to the success of the intrigues of Colonel Alikhanoff in securing Merv for Russia, was present with her two sons, one a lieutenant-colonel and the other a captain in the Russian service. She was covered with jewels, of which several were presented by the Czar after the annexation. They were valued at 30,000 roubles, are more than £3,000. Some of the Turcoman deputation proceeded to Tiflis, and two or three were promised aid to visit Russia. The whole may be expected to go back to Merv thoroughly tamed; but such Rip van Winkles as General Sir John Adye will none the less still nourish the belief that, if Russia went to war with England to-morrow, the Turcomans would welcome any force sent to help them rise against their masters.

SIR PETER LUMSDEN ON PENJDEH.

LONDON, *October 26th, 1888.*

GENERAL Sir Peter Lumsden is bitterly annoyed at my letter in the *Times*, demonstrating, on the evidence supplied by Lieut. A. C. Yate, that the *Times'* correspondent was correct in describing the disappearance of the British representatives from the battle of Kushk as a "disastrous flight." In this week's *Times* he fires an angry rejoinder, charging me with "traducing" the Commission, and claiming to have done his duty. This charge is neither courteous nor grateful on the part of Sir Peter Lumsden. When I bade

him good-bye on his departure from London for the Afghan frontier, I promised I would defend the honour of the Commission from the attacks of the pro-Russian party, and I believe I am simply stating what is a matter of common notoriety when I affirm that in book, in pamphlet, and in lecture I fulfilled my promise to the letter. Above all, in my "Russians at the Gates of Herat," of which 65,000 copies were sold, I did my utmost to defend the Commission from the slanderous attacks of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, M. Lessar, and O. K., and it was not till Sir West Ridgeway conceded an important part of the Kushk country to Russia that I felt compelled to play the part of adverse critic. Even then I applied my criticism solely to that particular incident: and it was not until Sir Peter Lumsden attacked in the most arrogant and uncalled for manner what I considered a dispassionate account of Merv by the *Times'* correspondent that I joined in and criticised the Penjdeh affair as well. Divinities of the desk in any country are cast in the same mould. So long as the press puffs them, they are ready to give their gracious patronage to newspaper writers as important and valuable educators of public opinion. The moment they are criticised, however, even though the criticism be as mild as a zephyr, they become red in the face, bluster, retort with arrogant invective, and would clap the critic in a jail or pack him off to Siberia if they had the power. In despotic countries the argument of the bureaucrat commonly takes the form of suppression of the individual newspaper. In England, however, "clerks in epaulettes," as Skobeleff used to contemptuously term generals who had passed most of their lives at the desk, have to meet their critics in print; and fortunately for the prestige of the permanent administration of the country, they are mostly able to make out a better case than Sir Peter Lumsden.

Sir Peter Lumsden tries to prove that his own retreat had nothing to do with Captain Yate's, and says that he had arranged his own departure a week beforehand. If so, it was a most unfortunate coincidence that he should not have fallen back until Captain Yate joined his party. Do what he can, Sir Peter Lumsden cannot disprove the primary fact that Captain Yate fell back upon him, and he at once fell back upon Tirpul. On this point the evidence of Lieutenant A. C. Yate is conclusive:—"Towards the end of March a further retreat to Tirpul was mooted. *The news of the fighting at Penjdeh*, which reached us March 31st, decided the question. On the 1st April the infantry and heavy baggage moved"... ...—("The Afghan Boundary Commission," page 311.) Unless Captain Yate's own brother, who was on the spot and wrote the above words a few days later, is to be wholly disbelieved, the two movements were certainly connected. The second point of Sir Peter Lumsden's reply is with regard to what I said about Captain Yate's flight in a false direction. He says:—"The route to Kalah-i-Maur

traversed the Maruchak road for some miles, and this is the only foundation for Mr. Marvin's statement that 'they gave out they were going to Maruchak.'" Now, here again Sir Peter Lumsden simply denies not myself but Lieutenant Yate, for the words he quotes are not mine but Lieutenant Yate's. The passage I referred to runs as follows:—"It was afternoon when the British camp got under weigh. *The guides gave out they were going to Maruchak.* As soon as the party was clear of the Saruk hamlets, leave was taken of the headmen. About seven miles from Penjdeh the British party *left the road*, and rode straight across the hills towards Kalah-i-Maur," quite the opposite direction to Maruchak—("The Afghan Boundary Commission," page 357.) Then follows Captain Yate's account of the miserable night spent in the hills, and the hurried movement at daylight, persisted in until the party reached its destination dead beat after thirty hours' almost continuous travelling. Surely Sir Peter Lumsden cannot be surprised at the Russians regarding the whole affair as a "disastrous flight" instead of the "orderly movement coolly carried out" claimed by Sir Peter Lumsden. My published writings bear ample testimony that I have ever defended the honour of England and England's soldiers against the mis-statements of Russians and the lies of the pro-Russian party at home; but at the same time I have a deep reverence for historical truth, and do not think it fair that a nation which prides itself on its accuracy, and ridicules other countries when they call a retreat a "strategic movement to the rear," should designate by the term of "orderly retirement coolly carried out" what was simply, in plain English, a floundering flight, through mire and snow, of the British representatives from Penjdeh to Tirpul.

In my opinion, the worst feature of Sir Peter Lumsden's reply is his attempt to throw the whole blame upon the poor Afghans. In his previous letter he threw the discredit for the "wretched business" upon Mr. Gladstone. It did not seem to me that this was fair, and I said so The conduct of Mr. Gladstone was disgraceful enough: the negotiations with Russia at that period must ever stink in the nostrils of Englishmen. But all the same, seeing that Alikhanoff and Komaroff were in sight of Penjdeh, and were trying to manœuvre the Afghans out of the place, it has always been my conviction that the whole British Commission should have been there, not at Gulran, far to the rear, where its presence was of no value at all. Private letters from the Commission sent home at the time ascribed the whole affair to this fatal blunder of Sir Peter Lumsden. In my first letter to the *Times* I expressed my belief—which is a belief shared also in Russia—that had Sir Peter Lumsden been at Penjdeh, Alikhanoff and Komaroff would have never been tempted to attack the place. On this point the evidence

of Lieutenant Yate may be again advantageously quoted against his arrogant master :—"It may be reasonably surmised that the Russians would not have dared to attack and occupy Penjdeh when under the *ægis* of the British Commission ; and if they had done so, they would have had to calculate, not with a weak force of Afghans only, but with the open hostility of 3,000 or 4,000 Saruk Turkomans"—("The Afghan Boundary Commission," page 372.) This is practically an imputation against Sir Peter Lumsden for rusticating at Gulran when he ought to have been safeguarding Penjdeh.

But, to the delight of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Sir Peter Lumsden ignores this charge of mine altogether, and throws the blame, not upon the Russians, but upon the Afghans. "The Afghans were informed," he says, "not once but many times that if they entered into conflict with the Russians, they must do so entirely on their own responsibility, and would receive no assistance from us. Their arrogance however decided them, against advice, to await attack and to try conclusions, with the well-known disastrous result." Now, considering it was entirely through our influence that the Afghans occupied Penjdeh and tried to preserve it and other menaced points from Russian seizure, it seems to me both mean and cowardly to throw the blame of the "wretched business at Penjdeh," as Sir Peter Lumsden terms it, upon the poor Afghans, who bravely attempted to hold the place. What they themselves thought of Sir Peter Lumsden is recorded by Captain Yate himself. He says, after describing the extravagant pretensions of the Russians in demanding the evacuation of the place :—"Kazi Saad-ud-din is said to have openly declared that we had no right to egg them on to fight the Russians, and then neither join in the fight nor give the Afghans good rifles to fight with."—("The Afghan Boundary Commission," page 330.) Sir Peter Lumsden say we advised them to retire, but who were the "we?" Not the Chief of the Mission, nor the bulk of the Mission, but a young subaltern who had just put on a captain's coat, had no great experience, possessed no force of character, and was to the Afghan General a mere minor, of no particular weight or rank, who had been left behind after all the majors and colonels of the British Commission had gone away. Advice from such a quarter simply begged the whole question : it threw the whole weight of responsibility upon the Afghan General himself, because had the Amir been angry with the evacuation, it would have been no extenuation for him to have pleaded that such a nonentity as a recently-fledged young captain had advised him, the old and matured General, to scuttle from Penjdeh. Had the advice however been given on the spot, at the height of the crisis, by General Sir Peter Lumsden, Chief of the British Commission, himself, it would have had a very different effect on the Afghan General, because the

responsibility would have been shared by the entire British Commission itself, and Kazi Saad-ud-din could have safely risked the Amir's displeasure. But, apparently to evade all responsibility, Sir Peter Lumsden kept away from Penjdeh, and the Afghans had to deal with the Russians as best they might. Sir Peter Lumsden claims in lofty language to have "done his duty;" but there are many ways of doing one's duty, and I am afraid, if most representatives of Great Britain did their's after the style of Sir Peter Lumsden, the Empire would very soon go to pieces. Sir Peter Lumsden says he had to "regard the instructions of the Government;" but England has always expected that when her system of party Government renders her policy weak and dishonourable those who carry it out will do so in such a manner as to at any rate correct the evil influences at work. Had the Duke of Wellington rigidly "regarded the instructions of the Government,' the Peninsular War would have had a very different ending. Had General Gordon been so precise and 'proper in obeying the instructions of a Government which never knew its own mind two minutes together, he might have safely returned home from Khartoum and been decorated with a K.C.B., but I don't think he would have stood much chance of getting that statue Parliament has just erected in Trafalgar Square. The dishonour of Khartoum is relieved by Gordon's glorious defence. His heroism wiped away the stain of that tragedy. The dishonour of Penjdeh has no such redeeming feature, it was a "wretched business" without a single bit of individual bravery to palliate it. Sir Peter Lumsden was unquestionably precise, proper, and prudent throughout; but there is a prudence that borders on poltroonery. He admits that everything was sacrificed "to maintain telegraphic and postal communications with the Government at home"—hence the retreat He was not happy unless he was playing the part of "clerk at the end of the wire." It is not an admission that will increase his reputation, or render the public more content with the Penjdeh affair. Any parish clerk would have done just as well on the spot as General Sir Peter Lumsden, G. C. B., Vice-President of the Council at the India Office, etc., etc., etc

Russians will compare with a sneer and a smile his letter, throwing the blame of the Penjdeh affair upon the Afghans, with Lieutenant A. C Yate's own book, wherein the blame is laid in a most elaborate manner on the backs of the Russians. On page 443 the brother of Captain Yate, who has been understood to give the latter's own account of the affair, says :—"Captain Yate considered it his duty, and that of the Afghan troops to resist Russian aggression.' If that be a correct statement of facts wherein were the Afghans to blame? If Captain Yate really believed it was the duty of the Afghans to resist, is not the inference fair that there existed grounds for the complaint of the Amir's agent at Penjdeh.

Kazi Saad-ud-din, that the British representatives "egged on" the Afghan to resist and then deserted them, for Captain Yate acted as go-between the Russians and Afghans in the negotiations that continued down to within a few hours of the fight? Really Russians have a clear cause of complaint against the British Commission for encouraging the public to believe they were the instigators of the Penjdeh affair, when as Sir Peter Lumsden now explains, the conflict was due to the "arrogance" of the Afghans. It is interesting to note, by the way that Russians assert that half the personal feeling that existed on the frontier between their representatives and the British Commission was due to the arrogance and want of cordiality of Sir Peter Lumsden himself.

I should like to have settled in the *Times* whether the Afghans really were so much in the wrong as Sir Peter Lumsden pretends. Unfortunately last week a letter of mine in the same paper on the explosion on board the *Ville de Calais* led to a controversy on petroleum steamers and dangerous lamps, and as the *Times* does not like a person to run two controversies at the same time in its columns, I had to submit to one being dropped. I therefore decided not to extend the Penjdeh discussion, unless the *Times* desired it, and this resolution was clenched while I was weighing the matter in my mind on Monday morning last, the day Sir Peter Lumsden's letter appeared, by the visit of a poor fellow who came to tell me that on Saturday night his brother had been killed by a paraffin lamp under most horrible and melancholy circumstances. At present between two hundred or three hundred persons are roasted alive every year in the United Kingdom alone through dangerous paraffin lamps Two years ago I started a crusade against them, and the agitation has only led to improvements in lamps, but has prepared public opinion for the passing of a law to put down dangerous ones. Curiously, the young fellow in question, Mr. Pirie, is leaving Woolwich Arsenal in a few weeks for Calcutta to take up a Government appointment there. On a future occasion I will deal with the lamp question in your columns. Meanwhile I believe most of your readers will agree with me that it was better, while one had the chance, to advocate in the *Times* a law to save two hundred or three hundred persons from an agonizing death every year, than to drop the controversy in support of it for the sake of a purely academical discussion (not worth a snap of the fingers to mankind at large) as to whether the Russians or Afghans or Sir Peter Lumsden himself, was the primary cause of the British disgrace at Penjdeh.



ENGLISH PLANS FOR INVADING THE CAUCASUS.

LONDON, *November 2nd, 1888.*

THE *Times* after all decided that a purely academical question, as to who was responsible for the "wretched business" at Penjdeh, was of more importance than the pressing social question of passing a law to put down the three hundred deaths from dangerous paraffin lamps occurring in the United Kingdom every year, and this week published my reply to Sir Peter Lumsden, the tenor of which was indicated in my letter to you of last Friday. Whether Sir Peter Lumsden will reply to it or not remains to be seen. Meanwhile I find myself involved in a second controversy in your London namesake, the *Morning Post*, with Colonel Maurice, author of the "Balance of Military Power in Europe." How the controversy originated possesses sufficient interest to warrant a few remarks. In 1885, when war with Russia seemed inevitable, plans were prepared at the War Office for an Anglo-Turkish expedition to the Caucasus, the idea being to effect a descent, raise the tribes against the Russians, and march to Baku, where Russia's communications with Turkomania were to be severed. The scheme was a mad one, and must have resulted in disaster; but it was favoured in high places, and even, I was assured at the time by Hobart Pasha, who was averse to it, by Lord Wolseley himself. The scheme was mad, because it was based on the belief that the Caucasus would "rise against the Russians and chuck them into the Black Sea and Caspian Sea" (as one officer described it to me at the time); but, as I shall directly show, there is nothing in the Caucasus to rise against Russia; therefore the expedition, being pitted against overwhelming numbers, must infallibly have come to grief During the war scare period, the plan was never sufficiently before the public to require extended criticism; but I resolved afterwards that I would apply my energies to educating England out of the belief that she could accomplish anything in the Caucasus, and have made a point since of contesting the matter with every military man who has supported the idea in print. Much to my regret my first encounter had to come off with Colonel Malleson, a writer for whom I have the highest respect, but who, in advocating an attack on the Caucasus two years ago in the *National Review*, based his arguments, not upon the latest Russian returns of the population, etc., but upon data of the Crimean War period. Thus he spoke of a "million tribesmen" helping us who were in reality simply a million ghosts, for the bulk had been killed or expelled the country by the

Russians while a new purely Russian population one-and-a-half millions strong had grown up that Colonel Malleson completely ignored. Colonel Malleson took my criticism very good-naturedly, being a thoroughly patriotic man and no "faddist," and suggested instead an attack upon the Russian line of communications through Persia. Later on the subject cropped up in the *Broad Arrow*, in which I published several articles; and still later I dealt with it in the "Illustrated Naval and Military Magazine." The latter article was written under curious circumstances. One day, while at my publishers, I ran against the editor, Major Elliot (now, poor fellow, in a lunatic asylum), who began a vigorous tirade against the Russians, which he finished by declaring that in the Caucasus England held a trump card that would upset the whole Russian game in Central Asia, at the same time repeating the principal points of Coloned Malleson's article. When he had done I said:

"My dear sir, you are like the bulk of officers of the home army who served in the Crimean War. You think the Caucasus still remains as it was then. You forget everything has changed since; even in the last ten years the transformation has been enormous; yet you plan your campaigns upon the dusty facts of a quarter of century ago instead of upon the fresh and living information of to-day. Now just come back to your room and we will fight it out on the map." So we went back and had half an hour's discussion over the map, and the result was a complete conversion from the idea and a request to attack it in an article for the magazine.

I mention this incident, not to rejoice at having replaced the opinions in Major Elliot's mind by my own (there was nothing interesting in that), but to show that his case was a typical one of that large number of officers who studied the subject in 1855, believing then quite rightly in the chance of success, but who, while retaining the idea, have omitted to take stock of the gradual transformation that has since taken place in the Caucasus, rendering its realisation to-day impossible Routine beliefs of this kind die hard, and it is only by constant controversy that they can be extirpated from the public mind. Last winter Sir John Adye published an article in the *Contemporary Review*, which showed that he still believed in attack upon the Caucasus. The article was of curiously Rip Van Winkle character, there being many passages which seemed to favour the impression that Sir John Adye had not read the newspapers for years. He spoke of the Caucasus being Russia's base of operations against India, which it is not, the Caspian Sea being the base of troops assembled there from Russia proper, the Caucasus being simply an auxiliary base; and he displayed a curious ignorance of the geographical character of the Russian position, by declaring that a rising in Armenia would sever the Russian line of communications to Herat. Although

Orenberg is now an obsolete military post, he also seemed to think that Russia would still have to march troops thence across "great deserts" to the Indian border. These and other evidences of old fogeyism I determined to deal with on a suitable occasion, which did not occur until ten days ago, when I discussed the whole subject of an Anglo-Turkish expedition to the Caucasus in the columns of the London *Morning Post*, under the heading of "Would the Caucasus rise against the Czar?" There being in Colonel Maurice's recently published "Balance of Military Power in Europe" certain remarks tending to favour the inmpression that he also believed in the possibility of such an expedition succeeding, I expressed my regret that a professor of military art at the Staff College could not take the trouble to educate himself in this question before implanting wrong ideas in the heads of the staff officers receiving their training from him. This led to a challenge from Colonel Maurice to mention any passages in his book that favoured such an idea. I quoted page 233, where he speaks of England with two *Corps d' armée* and Turkish aid "preventing Russia attacking us at Herat;" and another passage page 52 where he states that "In India itself our whole advantage lies in forcing Russia to act as far as possible from her base, and striking her line of communications through Persia." Now, it so happens that, owing to the Great Salt Desert of Persia, the Russian line of attack from the Caspian to Herat can only be approached from the Persian Gulf in two directions, namely, Teheran, upon the Caspian littoral, or *viâ* the Afghan side of the desert *viâ* Khaf. If, therefore, Colonel Maurice did not mean one, he must mean the other; and if, owing to the difficulties of the second, the reader assumed he meant the first (the use of the Turks favouring this view), the ambiguous language of Colonel Maurice was to be blamed for the misconception. At this Colonel Maurice wrote a very long, very angry, and very personal reply, betraying great warmth that I should have fancied he did not believe in an attack on the Caucasus. Whether he did or did not believe, however, he did not precisely say, and his whole letter generally was so full of irrelevant and ambiguous matter that, after reading it through several times without being able to find out what he was really driving at, I put it on one side as being one of those puzzles in verbosity Mr. Gladstone delights in, and wrote in plain terse language to ask whether Colonel Maurice really did or did not believe in an English attack on the Caucasus. This is the condition of affairs at the present moment. In the meanwhile it has led to one unexpected result. The Committee of the Royal Artillery Institution have invited me this morning to deliver a lecture before the officers of the garrison on the Russian military position, present and prospective, in the Trans-Caspian region, and I trust to see the subject therefore fairly fought out. If anything can be done against Russia in the quarter, no

one will be better pleased than myself to assist in furnishing any facts that favor it. The belief that the Moscow-Krasnovodsk-Herat line of attack is practically unassailable is no fad of mine; and personally I cannot understand that doctrinaire condition of mind which impels a man like Colonel Maurice to acrimoniously defend *a l' outrance* any opinion once expressed as a matter of personal honour and consistency. If Colonel Maurice could make out a good case on behalf of an attack on the Caucasus, I should only be too ready to throw overboard any previously expressed opinions of mine and support him; for any one who can diminish the difficulties of Indian defence, by promulgating sound plans for attacking Russia, is a public benefactor, and is entitled to every assistance as such.

A successful rising is impossible in the Caucasus, because there are no powerful elements to rise there on our behalf. The population of the Caucasus amounts to 5,750,000 souls, divided thus: Cis-Caucasia, 2 000,000; Trans-Caucasia, 3,250,000; and in the Daghistan highlands, on the Caspian side, 500,000 more. Of this number 3,550,000 are Christians and 2,200,000 Mussulmans. Thus, if we went in for a Mussulman rising, we should find ourselves in the minority. Analysed ethnographically, the total is made up of 1,500,000 Russians (rather a large number for an English army to conquer) and 750,000 Christian Armenians, who, like Loris Melikoff, form part of the administration and are more or less Russianised. This makes 2,250,000 thoroughly loyal people to conquer. Then come 1,000.000 Georgians and Mingrelians, all Christians and enemies of a Mussulman revolt, who, however they may occasionally express personal discontent, are in the main satisfied with Russian rule, and indignantly repudiate any idea of siding against her with the foreigner. Then there are over one-and-a-half million Tartars, a quiet people, dwelling for the most part between Tiflis and the Caspian, who are quite satisfied with Russian rule,* and have quite ignored previous attempts on the part of Turkey to stir them. After these, there are 110,000 Ossetis, nominal Christians, devoted to Russia, 60,000 Germans and Greeks and 30,000 Jews, making a total of five millions against us. Of the remaining 750,000 souls, the only elements we could in any way count on would be the 138,000 men, women, and children of the Tcherkess, Abkazian, and other tribes of the Black Sea side, and 150,000 men, women, and children of Tchetchenz, Lesghian, and other tribes of the eastern or Caspian side. Reckoning the extreme estimate of one in five as a fighting man. the former could provide 27,000 tribesmen and the latter 30,000. I question whether any large number of these would fight so thoroughly had the weeding process been carried out; but admitting all did, we could only hope for

27,000 tribal irregulars on landing and 30,000 more after we had passed Tiflis, having on the other hand to defeat the regular Russian Army of the Caucasus, 150,000 strong, and crush the five million Russian and pro-Russian inhabitants of the Caucasus. With these facts staring one in the face it is amazing there should be a single officer in the British Army holding to the belief, that we could accomplish anything in the Caucasus by the aid of the tribes.

Since the Russians founded Vladikavkaz a century ago, they have increased in numbers by 1,000,000, and are now rapidly becoming the chief racial element in the Caucasus. The Caucasus is no longer Asia ; it is part of Russia proper. On the other hand the far-famed Circassians, who numbered 500,000 at the time of the Crimean War had been remorselessly pruned down to 50,000 at the time of the last Russo-Turkish conflict, and now number only 25,000. The Turkish landing of 1877 rendered a useful service to Russia, for it showed what disaffected elements still prevailed in spite of twenty years persistent pacification, and enabled her after the war to root them out so thoroughly that a new expedition would now be only greeted by the riff-raff that infests all parts of the world But a sensible general would no more think of counting on the aid of the occasional brigands that flit about the Caucasus than a French commander would think of being helped, in the event of an invasion of England by the tramps that rob pedestrians and pilfer farm-houses on the high road from Dover to London. In one word, a rising in the Caucasus on a large scale is no longer possible, because there is nothing left there to rise.

Such being the case, could any Anglo-Turkish Army, without local help, hope to crush the Russian forces in the Caucasus and compel the obedience of the population. I do not believe it. But admit we crushed the army, the occupation of Tiflis would no more influence the movement of troops between Russia proper and Herat. *viâ* the Volga and Caspian, than the occupation of Timbuctoo. Admit even the occupation of Baku, what effect would that have on the operations of the Russians, twenty hours distant from us, on the opposite side of the Caspian? In 1885 the War Office (with what little wisdom is the world governed ?) seriously thought of taking steamers in sections to Baku, and pitting these penny steamers against the eight or nine hundred powerful steamers Russsa has on the Volga and Caspian, and the torpedo boats that could be sent by rail and river to the Caspian from Cronstadt in a fortnight. Such a contest of mole-hill *vs.* mountain could have only resulted in disaster, and it is a good job for England that the fight of 1885 never came off. Otherwise Wolseley would have found the grave of his reputation in the Caucasus.

LONDON, *November 9th, 1888.*

Colonel Maurice has not yet taken up the challenge I threw down to him in the *Morning Post* to demonstrate with hard facts the statement, in his "Balance of Military Power in Europe," that England with two *corps d'armée* and Turkish levies could cut Russia's road to India and cause her to fall back from Herat. I am afraid he found the task of proving a successful English campaign in the Caucasus to be possibly a little to hard for him when he began to overhaul the musty facts upon which the plan of 1885 was based In his book and in his last letter the professor claims for the Intelligence branch of the War Office superiority in knowledge over the Intelligence branch of India. Possibly; but it is not the possession of knowledge, but the use a man makes of it, that demonstrates his capacity. The War Office had abundance of knowledge as to the art of making good bayonets, but it turned out some of the greatest rubbish the world has ever seen. I am afraid the plans Colonel Maurice talks so grandiloquently about are not much better.

PUSHING THE CASPIAN RAILWAYS.

LONDON, *January 4th, 1889.*

TWO interesting items of news have reached me from Russia this week. One is that the Transcaspian authorities have applied to the Imperial Government for 1,600,000 roubles (£160,000) to be expended in improving and perfecting the Transcaspian Railway, and the other that the Committee of Ministers have given their consent to the construction this year of the railway from Vladikavkaz to Petrovsk, which will complete the railway communication between St. Petersburg and the Caspian Sea. With regard to the former, there is very little doubt as to the granting of the sum demanded, the new Minister of Railways, General Paucker, being in favour of the application. Indeed, he could hardly have opposed it, seeing that last spring the commission, of which he was president, reported, after a close examination of the line from Uzun Ada to Samarcand, that a large expenditure would be needed to bring the railway into a proper working condition. Some time ago I expressed the opinion that the *Times'* correspondent had given a too pessimist view of the line in his articles from Central Asia. General Annenkoff did not facilitate the correspondent's journey as he might have done, and hence Mr. Dobson arrived too late for the inaugural ceremony. A little personal pique was,

therefore, at the back of the slashing attacks on the line. Recently I had the pleasure of meeting at a dinner the Hon. George Curzon, M. P., who went to Samarkhand a month later than Mr. Dobson. He spontaneously expressed the opinion, in the course of conversation, that the *Times'* correspondent had been a little too severe on the line, and that the defects were being remedied even while he was there. This I prognosticated would be the case for two reasons: first, the rapidly increasing goods traffic from Bokhara to the Caspian would, unless properly managed, lead to a mercantile outcry, and thus to a reform; and, secondly, the very attacks in the *Times* being read by the ministers and officials concerned, would put the latter on their mettle and enforce improvement If the *Times* is not so powerful in this country as it used to be, its influence in Russia is still undiminished. Every public department of importance at St. Petersburg takes in the paper, and some departments several copies ; and what is of more importance the paper is diligently read "by the powers that be," commencing with the Emperor and running through a series of Grand Dukes, ministers, high officials and professors attached to the departments. On this account Mr. Dobson's exposure was bound to lead to inquiry and inquiry to reform. As I pointed out at the time, had General Annenkoff opened his mouth too wide the construction of the line might have been delayed for years. He asked for just enough money to carry a line of metals through to Samarkhand shrewdly assumed that once the line was open for traffic the opposition to its construction would be "busted," and plenty of money be forthcoming for converting the affair into a regular railway. Ministers and officials might oppose his attempt to realise the idea of a Caspian railway to Samarkhand, but none would oppose the granting of funds for improvements once the idea had been realised. This view has been justified by events. Annenkoff has received repeated assistance since the line was inaugurated, and the Ministry of Railways, which opposed the construction of the line last year, now approves of the undertaking, and would like to take it over completely from the War Office.

Mr. Curzon is a young politician of great ability. The letters he has been contributing to a syndicate of provincial papers on his trip to Central Asia are admirably written, and I am glad to learn that there is some prospect of their appearing, at no distant date, in book form. Some of his views, I believe, would have been altered or ripened by a longer stay in Russia; but he certainly used his eyes well while there, and the trip will enable him to discuss Russian affairs in the future with considerable advantage over those Conservative M. P.'s of the vestryman type, who are content to illuminate their speeches with such will-o'-the-wisps as Peter the Great's will, and the fading

sparkles of the Earl of Beaconsfield's speeches. To me it is a source of great satisfaction that more and more Englishmen visit Russia every year. If ever a *modus vivendi* is to be established between the two countries, it will not be accomplished by a policy of lick spittle, nor by such unscrupulous Russophilism as that adopted by the *Pall Mall Gazette;* but by increased intercourse between the two peoples, and a greater appreciation of each other's good qualities. If Russia can learn much from England, the latter, on her part, can learn a good deal from Russia, and I repeat, what I have before declared, that the national characteristics of the two peoples are more in favour of friendship than of enmity. I look to the time when the same relations will subsist between England and Russia that prevail between England and France, that is to say, sufficient popular knowledge to tolerate each other's peculiarities, coupled with a clear appreciation of the rival aims of the two countries, which, while preventing an alliance, will admit of efforts being made on both sides to minimize the chances of actual collision. When I came from Russia to settle in England, in 1875, I called on Mr. John Cook, on behalf of a friend at St. Petersburg, to propose the extension of the tourist system to Russia. Mr. Cook mentioned that the matter had been in his mind some time, and he went into the subject again with my friend; but in the end decided to drop the idea, owing to the difficulties of making suitable arrangements in Russia and the indifference to Russia on the part of the British public. Now-a-days every corner of Russia is infested with tourists, and whole streams of English people perform the circular tour of Vienna, Constantinople, Batoum, the Caspian, the Volga, Moscow, and St. Petersburg under the guardianship of Cook and Gaze. The Caucasus, moreover, has become a favourite field for the operations of the Alpine Club, a score of members of which have climbed the peaks there of late years. In 1875, hardly an officer spoke Russian and teachers of Russian in London starved in their attempts to secure pupils At present probably over a hundred officers are excellent Russian scholars; twenty passing at the last October examination alone. Meanwhile, Russian novels by Tolstoi are the rage, and many Englishmen are beginning to devote themselves to the rich and varied stores of native literature existing in Russia unknown to Europe. Among these I may mention a son of the actor Irving, who has just arrved at St. Petersburg with this end in view. This activity on the part of the army and general public is in marked contrast with the apathy of commercial men, who do not take the slightest trouble to learn Russian or to improve our trade with Russia. While the Chambers of Commerce are taking no notice at all of the Government's attempt to improve our commercial hold on Southern Persia, the influential Russian Society for

the Development of Trade has been agitating with success for the extension of the Russian railway system from Vladikavkaz to Pétrovsk. Some of the members wished for the completion of the Russian railway system from Vladikavkaz to Tiflis, but this would cost thirty million roubles (£3,000,000) and five years to construct, whereas the other can be finished in two, at an expenditure of five million roubles; consequently the majority supported the Petrovsk scheme, which in turn has been approved of by the Committee of the Minister. I have repeatedly drawn attention to the strategical value of this line, which will give Russia a railway route to the Caspian, when the River Volga is closed by ice, and a railway north of the Caucasus, tying together the Caspian and Black Seas, (Petrovsk and Novorossisk) paralled with the similar railway, south of it, running from Batoum to Baku.

WAS RUSSIA ENGLAND OR AFGHANISTAN TO BLAME FOR PENJDEH.

LONDON, *January 4th, 1889.*

IN one of your recent issues I observe that Captain A. C. Yate has been writing to the Indian press complaining that I "deliberately misquoted" his words in my letter to the *Times* the other day on Penjdeh. The passage in question was this:—"Only a few commissariat stores and one or two tents were left behind. However it was very little use saving kit at the risk of life, only to lose it in a miserable hurricane a few days later." It seemed to me on perusal that these words were of an apologetic character, and I said so. I still think the same, and any average reader, apart from the grammarian, will doubtless share my view. Captain Yate, however did not mean a plain interpretation to be placed on his words, and foams at the mouth at the "dishonourable misuse" I have made of them. Nay, he goes further: I have not only dishonourably misinterpreted what he meant to say, but I have "stooped to a shady artifice" (why?) "arguing that the standard of Mr. Marvin's literary morality is a low one." Being thus a sort of political Guy Fawkes, conspiring to blow up the reputation, of the Afghan Boundary Commission, I am (simply beause I understood Captain Yate's words to have a meaning he says he did not mean to convey); to be henceforth treated as a liar, or, as he puts it, "the public may decide for the future whether any statements of such a writer are deserving of credence." In other words, because Captain Yate cannot write plain English, that will lead to no misinterpretation, therefore the

British public is solemnly requested not to listen for the future to anything I may say. Really this attempt of small beer to turn thunder flat is so amusingly infantile that I would ignore it were there not in his letter an accusation which requires an answer in the interests of historical accuracy. So far from being filled with personal *animus* against any member or members of the Commission, I know not a single member who belonged to it, and have only met two in my life—Sir Peter Lumsden and Captain Barrow, both at an interview that took place at the India Office, at the request of the former, before the departure of the Commission. The rest are absolute strangers to me, and but for this interview, I might declare all to be such. Of Sir Peter Lumsden I always spoke in the warmest terms up to the time of the Penjdeh affair, and I did not criticise that affair until compelled to do so recently in the *Times*. With regard to Sir West Ridgeway, I wrote nothing against him until he ceded the Koushk district to Russia, when I publicly denounced the arrangement as inimical to the safety of Herat. To one of the protests I published, Captain A. C. Yate made a reply, and this was the first time I felt called upon to take notice of his books. Therefore, never having met Ridgeway, Yate and other members of the Commission, I have not that bias which sometimes arises when one meets individuals and is charmed by their manners or affronted by intentional or unintentional slights. In one word I have all along discussed in the press the operations of Lumsden, Ridgeway, and Yate as dispassionately as I have discussed the operations of Jack the Ripper in Whitechapel. I have no interest in writing up or writing down Jack the Ripper, and, similarly, I have no interest in writing up or writing down Captain A. C. Yate. Sir Peter Lumsden himself described the Penjdeh affair as a "wretched business." That has always been my view, but because I have sought, in the interest of historical accuracy, to ascertain with whom the blame rests for this "wretched business," I am constantly assailed by Captain A. C. Yate as conspiring to undermine the reputation of the British officers concerned.

Against such an accusation I have but one reply to make. Had Lumsden, Ridgeway, and Yate been as anxious for the honour of England on the Afghan frontier as they have been for their own reputations since their return from it, I am convinced there would have been no "wretched business" to complain of. These men forget that a public writer, like myself, is constantly called upon, whether he like it or not, to discuss the Penjdeh affair; and cannot, therefore, relegate to posterity the settlement of the question who was to blame? If confusion exists on that score, Lumsden, Ridgeway and Yate are to blame for it. Everybody remembers how the blame at the time was saddled upon Alikhanoff and

Komaroff, who were accused by the British officers of the Commission of attacking Penjdeh like freebooters. This had become quite a fixed belief with the public, when suddenly last October Sir Peter Lumsden put the blame upon the Gladstone Government first and the poor Afghans afterwards.

On October 9th Sir Peter Lumsden wrote :—"However much the wretched business at Koushk is to be deplored, the responsibility of it rested not with the British officers of the Commission, but on those responsible for the position in which they were placed."

When I pointed out that in my opinion the blame ought to be shared by Lumsden also for not having been at Penjdeh at the time, he wrote on October 19th to the *Times* as follows:—

"My duty and that of my officers was to obey orders. Perhaps I may be allowed to ask what would have been the comments of Mr. Marvin if these same officers had disregarded the instructions of the Government, and by joining the Afghans precipitated a war with Russia. The Afghans were informed, not once but many times, that if they entered into the conflict they must do so on their own responsibility, and would receive no assistance from us. Their arrogance, however, decided them, against advice, to await attack and to try conclusions with the well-known disastrous result." Captain A. C. Yate, on the other hand, solemnly declares that the Afghans simply did their duty in resisting the Russians. In summing up the "results of the Commission" in his "Afghan Boundary Commission," he says (page 443) :—

"In defiance of the agreement General Komaroff advanced with a force three thousand strong, and forced a combat on the Afghans. In consequence of the Governmental attitude, blame has been attached to the British officer at Penjdeh (Major Yate), who, cognisant only of the agreement of the 16th of March, considered that *it was his duty and that of the Afghan troops* to resist Russian aggression."

Now, if Yate believed it was the duty of the Afghans to resist the Russians, and the Afghans believed it also, I ask, in the name of English manliness, if it is honourable for Sir Peter Lumsden to put the whole blame on their shoulders?

The Russians, on their part put the blame on Sir Peter Lumsden, who, they declare, ought to have been at Penjdeh. As for the Afghans themselves they considered at the time they had been betrayed by the Commission. The Naib Salar, who commanded at Penjdeh, said (page 369 of Yate's book): "I am glad that we fought the Russians, for now we know who are our friends and who our foes. Those at least who bade us fight and left us to be

annihilated, who gave us advice and not arms, are not our real friends."

Having to chose, in common with other Englishmen, between these conflicting statements, I have arrived at the opinion that Sir Peter Lumsden was to blame for not having been on the spot, and that the conduct of Major Yate throughout the affair was what might be expected from a weak young subordinate, of no force of character, and possessing a keen appreciation neither of his own honor nor of that of England. After watching the battle afar off Alikhanoff sent him a pair of boots to run away in, an insult which his own brother describes as "a gross act of dastardly insolence, showing that neither courtesy nor generosity was to be expected from so ignoble a foe." Yet Major Yate afterwards dined with the man who had thus insulted him before all Central Asia, and did not mind the trophies of Penjdeh on the wall. What a picture of the poacher and the licked spaniel feeding together! Imagine a Pottinger leaving the Afghans in the lurch in the first place, and dining in the second with "so ignoble a foe," as Yate's brother calls Alikhanoff. Truly a "wretched business" altogether, and to be mentioned only in the same breath with Majuba Hill, Sinkat, and Maiwand. Whether Yate should not have challenged Alikhanoff to fight a duel on receipt of the boots is a matter admitting of argument, because Yate represented a Government as well as himself: but I imagine no manly Englishman will consider that he acted rightly in accepting bread from a man who, in the words of his own brother, had treated him with such "dastardly insolence" before receiving an apology from Alikhanoff. Had the affair been reversed I believe Alikhanoff would have shot or whipped Yate before he would have dined with him; and I am persuaded that the Tzar would have approved of the act.

However, this is a purely personal matter, and need not be discussed any further. What, however, cannot but crop up from time to time is the question,—who was to blame at Penjdeh, the Russians, the Afghans, Mr. Gladstone, or Sir Peter Lumsden? This is a question that cannot be shelved, because at any moment circumstances may revive it in the press. Now an answer to this question I am bound to give, and I would put this demand to those concerned: Am I for the sake of the reputation of Lumsden and Yate to lie against the reputation of Komaroff and Alikhanoff? To Russians their good name is as precious as it is to Englishmen, and I see no reason why they should be falsely assailed, simply because they did their duty to the Empire whose interests they were representing. As for saddling it upon the Afghans, unless Lumsden refutes Yate's statement that his brother and the Afghans "felt it their duty" to resist the Russians, it would appear to be

an odious act to defame men who were at Penjdeh, because England wished them to be there, who were defending not purely Afghan interests (if we clear our minds of cant) but the interests of our Empire, and who, whatever their errors, fought gallantly for the sake of those interests, and behaved in a manner of which Afghans have a right to be proud. My books bear record that I am a warm admirer of all officers and officials who patriotically further the interests of the Empire with their whole heart; but I will be no party to the propagation of historical shams. If Lumsden gives two widely varying versions of the cause of the Penjdeh fight, and Yate a third differing totally from both, it is preposterous to charge a public critic with being a liar and traducer because he elects to have an independent opinion of his own. That opinion I am quite ready to change when the proper evidence is forthcoming. Of the two I would rather see Komaroff and Alikhanoff proved to be in the wrong than Lumsden and Yate; but the latter must compose their own differences first as to the causes of the affair before they can hope the public to side with them trustfully against the true delinquent. It is their own fault that their conflicting excuses have carried with them accusations to which a plain reply must now be made. But for those excuses, casually blurted out, the world might have gone on erroneously thinking Russia to be wholly in the wrong.

AN "INVETERATE PANIC-MONGER."

LONDON, *February 8th, 1889.*

IN one of your issues to hand you publish an extract from the *Statesman*, in which Mr. Knight accuses me of being an "inveterate panic-monger." On a subsequent date you kindly point out that Mr. Knight was wholly in the wrong in his statement as to my opinions with regard to cutting Russia's road to India; and therefore I do not need to deal with the particular point giving rise to the charge. But I would like, with your permission, to say something about the charge itself. In the first place, the statements in the *Statesman* generally reveal such ignorance of the policy I have inculcated since I first began writing on the Russo-Indian question that I would be prepared to stake a substantial wager that, if Mr. Knight tried to define my views in a three or four column article, nineteen-twentieths of what he published would be found to be quite the contrary to what I have always maintained on the platform and in print. The position I have occupied in regard to the Russo-Indian question

has always been an independent one. It has rarely been that of advocate, but that of judge. I have applied the lash of criticism to Russophobe and Russophile, to Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury, to Lumsden and Ridgeway, as well as to Alikhanoff and Komaroff, to the political cheats of Parliament as well as to the diplomatic deceivers of autocracy, and to the people of my own country as well as to the people of the country which, after my own, I love most. At the same time, while I ever seek to strike straight and strike fair, I have always had a detestation of that sneering, nagging criticism which makes a certain section of Radicalism as odious as the dung-heap that fouls the landscape. No doubt there is good in that form of Radicalism, just as there is good in the dung-heap; but for mankind who may be enjoying the sunshine and the landscape, the unnecessary efforts of the dung-heap to pervade the whole firmament, and reduce the delightful scents of herb and flower to its own stinking level, savour too much of self-conceit and impertinence. This form of Radicalism is not so popular in this country as it was some ten years ago, although it seems to still hold its ground in India. Thanks to the manly example of such rising Radicals as Lord Rosebery, politicians at home are beginning to find that it does not do for a man who wishes to carry weight with the masses to have the eyes of a mole and the heart of a coney. Politicians have discovered that it is possible for a Radical to be an Imperialist without being a Jingo, and to be a patriot without having to surrender his democratic aspirations. The nagging, sneering, canting Radicalism which grew out of the teaching of Carlyle and others received a severe blow when Froude revealed what a brute Carlyle had been to his wife; and if it lingers in the vicinity of Home Rule circles, it is only a characteristic of the rump of the Radical party—a rump that would disappear at once into insignificance with the death of Mr. Gladstone.

My works bear witness that I can eulogise as well as apply the lash; that I can praise a Russian whom I consider to have acted honestly, as well as denounce an Englishman for acting the reverse. To me the Russian advance has been like a game of chess. My frequent visits to Russia and of my daily receipt of the Russian newspapers have enabled me to watch the game from the Russian side of the board as well as from the English, and I have never been able to wholly suppress applause when Russia has made a good move, although I have been forced at the same time very often to denounce the deceit of the Russian players on the one hand and the stupidity of the English on the other. The annexation of Khokand, Bokhara, and Khiva I never protested against. If we did not intend to hold them and put down the misrule that seethed in those khanates, I could not blame Russia for including them in her sphere; and this was also my opinion

with regard to Turkomania, excluding only Merv, which might, I always believed, have been made a forepost of Herat, and prevented a junction of the Turkestan and Caspian communications. At an early period of my political career, I urged that the military authorities of India should secretly define the best fighting line in Afghanistan, and that we should work up by degrees to that line and the best frontier beyond, leaving all beyond that frontier to be annexed by Russia. That was no more a policy of panic than the policy of the householder who puts bolts on his doors and insures his house against fire can be called a policy of panic. Instead of nagging at Russia as she made each advance, and then in the end be compelled to take any leavings of a frontier she chose to chuck to us, I recommended that we should choose our own frontier in good time, while she was yet afar off; then calmly await her approach. Such a course would have prevented the humiliations of Sarakhs, Penjdeh, and Badgheis, and saved the taxpayer many millions sterling, without in any way impairing the relations of England and Russia. I do not believe in any great scheme for the conquest of India handed down in Russia from generation to generation; but I do believe that it is sinning in the face of Providence to leave the defences of India in such a condition that Russia may be tempted, in a moment of neediness or political rage, to attempt to drive us out of India The cant view, of course, is that God Almighty gave us India to rule, and that if Russia advanced, she would have to contend not only with the British Army but with the British Army plus God Almighty, as though there were no divinity shaping the ends of Russia, and no features in Russian rule that might not be more acceptable to certain classes in India than our own methods of government. By all means let us hold to the belief that God did give us India to rule, and let us act prayerfully and manfully up to that belief; but at the same time let us take care that the Afghan frontier be well spiked with the British bayonet. And for this reason, that Russia does not believe that Providence placed us in charge of India, but looks upon England as a commercial vampire, sucking the blood out of the country, to eject whom from India might, under certain circumstances, be thought worthy of the patronage of heaven.

I do not like men who delight in the success of their prophesies, or I might compile a very interesting book under the title, say, of "I told you so," in which might be arranged my predictions that have come true. Take an early instance—the pamphlet, *Russia's Railway to Herat*, of which I circulated, in 1881, one thousand copies to Parliament and the press, containing General Annenkoff's map of his Transcaspian Railway, then hardly known in England, and ridiculed as something that would not occur before another

century. Even Sir Henry Rawlinson thought that Russia had not enough to pay for a Transcaspian line. In that pamphlet I pointed out the probability that the line would be in existence in a few years, and urged the Government to start afresh on the suspended Quetta Railway. What was there of the panic-monger in that? The Transcaspian line is now an accomplished fact; it could be completed to Herat in a few months if Russia seized the place; and there is hardly a politician of any party in England who does not wish our own Quetta Railway were finished to Kandahar.

Take another case: the maps in *Merv, the Queen of the World*, published in 1881, above all the one on page 336, on which is written: "The conquest of Akhal extends Russian rule to Gijaoors; the conquest of Merv will *extend it to Penjdeh*" At that time Penjdeh was unknown in England, and Politicians of the mole-eyed coney-hearted type were declaring that if Russia went to Merv, she would go to Merv only, and would find at Merv only a few mud huts not worth annexation. Who was right? They or I? Even when Merv was annexed, and the annexation was debated in the House of Commons, what did I write in the pamphlet *The Russian Annexation of Merv*, which was distributed to the members as they went into the House, and was seen in most of their hands during the debate?—"that the annexation of Merv, being inevitably attended with the incorporation of the Sarikh Turcomans, will extend Russian rule one hundred miles up the Murghab to Penjdeh, at the foot of the Paropamisus, or within one hundred and forty miles of Herat." This was not deemed possible at the time; but did it not come true?

One more quotation from *Merv* in 1881:—"If we wait till Russia enters Merv and posts Cossacks on the Paropamisus range, we shall have to accept, at the dictation of Ruissa, *her* delimitation of the two Empires, with the dishonourable drawback of having to cede the best of India-menacing points to her as the power in possession. Is it, therefore, too much to ask that our border line be arranged without delay?"

Was not this an accurate forecast of what actually did occur four years later? When I first began to write about Central Asia, it was not believed, even by Russophobists like Rawlinson, that any easy roads existed for a Russian Army to march, above all with artillery, upon India. The whole of England's statesmen and the whole of England's generals kept their eyes fixed upon Orenburg, and from Orenburg looked across the deserts of the Kirghiz tribes to the lofty barrier of the Hindu Kush, offering insuperable difficulties to the advance of a great army. It took me five years' incessant writing,

day after day, week after week, month after month, to drag John Bull's head round from Orenburg to the Caspian, and make him look at the easy road existing between the Caspian and Kandahar. It was during this period that Sir Henry Rawlison proved such a traitor to English interests. He more than any other had fixed the gaze of England upon the Turkestan advance. He more than any other realised the greatness of the change when Russia, in 1879, shifted the aggressive movement to the Caspian. But he was in a huff with his own country, because the class of men of which Mr. Knight is a forlorn and lingering representative to-day, had assailed and insulted him during the period he was proclaiming the dangers of the Turkestan advance from the house-top. So he held his tongue, and the public imagining from his silence that there was nothing dangerous in the new Transcaspian movement allowed it to go on unchecked, until the sudden seizure of Merv aroused it from its lethargy. But the mischief was done, and whatever claims to consideration Sir Henry Rawlinson possesses as a patriotic sentinel during the Russian advance upon Bokhara and Khiva, they are outweighed by the fact that his deliberate silence during the conquest of the Turcomans facilitated the Russian advance as much as the indifference of the Gladstone Government. He cried "Wolf! wolf!" when the wolf was afar off; and because the public did not give him sufficient heed he held his tongue, and would not cry wolf at all when he saw the wolf getting over a wall, unsuspected by the public, into the sheepfold. It was because the sentinel turned traitor, out of pique, that I feel that I can never give any honour to Sir Henry Rawlinson in regard to the Russo-Indian question. How different his conduct from that of Sir Charles Macgregor, who deliberately risked his career, in 1885, in order to awaken England to a sense of her danger!

A public writer who calls attention to political dangers until he catches the ear of the public, and is trustfully regarded as the guardian of its interests in the direction menaced, is surely in duty bound to sing out when he sees fresh rocks ahead, if only for the sake of that public he has educated into reposing confidence in him. And if he does not, and deliberately does not, is he not a traitor to the interests he had previously watched over with such zeal? Such a charge could never be brought against Arminius Vambery, whatever may be said about his Russophobia. From the point of view of hard cash, he would have done far better had he preached on behalf of Russia instead of England, because Russia would have paid him well for his advocacy; whereas he has received nothing from England, except what may have sprung from meagre pecuniary results of his writings. But while I cannot travel as far as he does, and do not share his hatred of Russia, I should be sorry,

even if I were a survivor of that Radical school to which I have referred. to apply to one who had been such a true and warm-hearted friend of my country the epithet of "panic-monger."

So far as I am personally concerned, I can claim that I have, on more than one occasion, allayed a panic caused by those fears which a mole-eyed policy is apt to engender among its devotees. In 1882, while the Gladstone Government was in power, there suddenly arose a scare over the delimitation of the Atrek frontier. A convention had been signed by Persia and Russia without the knowledge of England; and there were no louder denouncers of the compact than the affrighted Radicals of the hour. Having received a copy of the treaty from Russia, and found no serious annexations of Persian territory had been made, I prepared a map, of which I circulated some six hundred copies among members of the House and the principal newspapers, and put a stop to the rising tide of feeling against Russia so effectually that when a little while later I happened to proceed to St. Petersburg, I was heartily thanked by M. de Giers for what I had done. That was not the action of an "inveterate panic-monger," I think; but one cannot expect men who are content to grovel in ignorance to have any sympathy with, and respect for, those who from the Pisgah heights of knowledge survey the progress of mankind and note the march of empires. "Little minds and great empires go ill together," wrote Burke long ago. Until recently there was too great a tendency in this country to allow the little minds to monopolise the platform, and because they threw a deal of mud about and made a loud noise to leave them in charge of Imperial interests. At present a policy of vigorous expulsion prevails among the educated public; and if the blows delivered back are harder than those delivered, the "little minds" are alone to blame for having invited the castigation.

THE AFGHAN FRONTIER AND INDIAN DEFENCE.

LONDON, *February 15th, 1889.*

IF it were not that the prevalence of bad weather in Central Asia precludes the idea of immediate military operations on a large scale, the news from Chardjui about the concentration of troops, and the flitting hither and thither of generals, might be considered exceedingly ominous. As it is, the arrival of the Amir, with a large force in proximity to the Oxus, has evidently either rendered the

Russians uneasy in regard to their military position there, or has been seized upon by them as a pretext for a demonstration against Abdurrahman Khan. There can be no doubt that his presence there at all is not very agreeable to the Russians. Afghan Turkestan has been looked upon by them for years as a rotten branch that would readily drop off the Afghan tree. If the truth were known, Ishak Khan did not break out in revolt against the Amir without the knowledge of Alikhanoff's sentiments, and perhaps at his actual instigation. To Alikhanoff restlessness is a necessity. Unless he keeps stirring the Afghan pot, his career will stagnate and undergo no development. Now, it is no secret to the world, any more than it is to his friends, that he is a very energetic man and exceedingly ambitious. His future, as the Russians say, "lies in the palm of his hand." If he chooses to stagnate, he will live and die a simple colonel, for the position at Merv is no stepping-stone to anything else in the Russian service. This is well known to Alikhanoff, and if he does not become Russian Governor of Herat within the next five years, it will not be for want of energetic plotting. I must say that I watch his operations with the deepest interest. I watch for his next move with as much curiosity as I await the next murder of Mr. Jack-the-Ripper. I know perfectly well what I should do if I were in Alikhanoff's place; and I am waiting to see whether he will adopt the course that is in my mind, or will follow any other policy. For the moment, he is looked upon in Russia as a little nonplussed. Instead of Ishak Khan succeeding as was expected, his following has been scattered like chaff, and the Amir is decapitating wholesale the friends of the traitor and—the friends of Alikhanoff. Hence much annoyance and an unpleasant end to the honeymoon of the gallant Russian. From dalliance with the fair daughter (or possibly "dark" daughter—I am not sure as to her colour) of the Khan of Nakhietchevan, Alikhanoff has had to apply himself afresh to "war's alarms." The interruption may be but passing; but, on the other hand, how great the temptation to take the scalp of the Amir, now he is so close to the Cossacks, and let Afghanistan welter once more in anarchy.

But these are merely speculations, and it is a waste of time to indulge much further in them. The only thing that is really certain is, that neither the officials at St. Petersburg nor those on the frontier are pleased at the presence of the Amir in Afghan Turkestan. The worst is that Abdurrahman Khan knows the Russians of old, and they feel that he is able to penetrate their plans, whatever they may be. On a famous occasion they let him slip from Samarkhand to upset things in Afghan Turkestan, and make matters warm for us at Kabul. Why should they not repeat the game with Ishak Khan? Hence probably the demand for the safe

internment of the rebel, which has been construed, perhaps purposely, into threats of a war with Bokhara. If Russia wanted to smash the Amir, this demand could be readily manufactured into a pretext. Cut off as he is by the snow from Kabul, a Russian attack, accompanied by a fomented Uzbeg rising might settle the Afghan question at a blow. We, of course, would occupy Kabul and Kandahar; but General Rosenbach would be master of Afghan Turkestan, Alikhanoff would be inside Herat, and the Russians would possess all that they are aiming at just now. And they would get what they want under circumstances that would almost preclude the possibility of an Anglo-Russian war, because Abdurrahman would be proved to have contemplated invading Bokhara, etc., etc., etc., in the usual Russian diplomatic style.

I cannot but repeat that England is guilty of gross supineness in allowing the Amir to be in Afghan Turkestan, cut off from Kabul, and face to face with the Russians, without a good English officer at his side to give him moral support and prevent the Russians having all their own way in fabricating a diplomatic case against him. Of course, it would not do to place with him such nervous, irresolute creatures as Yate and Ridgeway, or a please-don't--cut-me-off-from-the-wire sort of clerk as Lumsden, but a resolute and stalwart Envoy of the Lepel Griffin type, able to make up his mind in a moment on delicate points of policy, and not keep crying home for comfort and counsel like a little boy just severed from his mamma. To those who would demur, on the ground that the officer's life might be in danger, I would suggest an hour's study of Indian history. There they would find hundreds of cases where English representatives have been placed in far more perilous positions without either England or her Envoy suffering minor concern from the danger. To me it has always appeared a fatal policy to close Afghanistan to Englishmen, because we play into Russia's hands by leaving the country open for her secret operations. The more Englishmen circulated about the country, the more the Afghans would get to regard us as their friends and protectors, and the less easy it would be for Alikhanoff and Komaroff to carry on their plots. The ice of Afghan reserve was broken when the Boundary Commission passed through the country; and the aim of the Indian Government should be to encourage English officers and traders to roam about it on the one hand and encourage the Afghan notables to pay frequent visits to India on the other. I would have English officers constantly moving about the Herat district, so as to make Russia feel that the recently drawn frontier is the frontier of India and not of Afghanistan only.

The current number of the *Fortnightly* contains two articles on Indian defence—one by an "Indian officer," and the other, in the

form of a critique, by Colonel Maurice. If the former represents the prevalent official view in India, I cannot share its optimist tone. In one respect the article is sound—the writer does not believe in a Caucasus or Asia Minor campaign: he believes the fighting business can come off and will come off only in Afghanistan and Central Asia. But we must not stand on the defensive. That would be fatal. On that point almost every military writer seems agreed. But when the proposed offensive operations are discussed, the article is not so satisfactory. The plan seems to be to raise Afghanistan, and sweep the Russians back from Turkestan and Turkmenia to the Caspian Sea. And then?. "One desperate campaign would shatter (on the shores of the Caspian) the power of Russia, both in Asia and in Europe (*sic*) for many long years to come." And again, "Greater Britain has then only to make up her mind to see the business through at any cost, and the war would close with the cession of every Russian vessel on the Caspian (how ?); together with the port of Krasnovodsk, which by the time would be connected with India by rail."

Now, I am ready to admit the possibility of licking Russia in Central Asia, and sweeping her back to the Caspian—I admit it for the sake of argument; but I ask what then ? Russia is no more vulnerable at Krasnovodsk than she is at Vladivostok. Licked on land, with the whole of her Turkestan and Turkmenian armies—prisoners if you like—she would still remain supreme mistress on the Caspian Sea, with its hundreds of steamers and sailing ships and its enormous reserve of steamers on the Volga in the rear; and I ask what could the successful English general at Krasnovodsk do against these? The submission of Rosenbach and Komaroff could not necessarily involve the surrender of a single steamer or soldier beyond the East Caspian shore. How would the Russian power in the Caucasus be "shattered," let alone the Russian power in Europe, which would still remain fresh and intact, and as formidable as ever? The English general, by fighting his way to Krasnovodsk, could no more compel the surrender of every Russian vessel on the Caspian than he could compel the surrender of the fleet at Cronstadt. It would be a repetition of tiger *versus* shark for the moment; then would pour down the hordes of fresh troops from the Volga, with gun-boats and torpedo-boats from the Baltic, as I described last week, and the British commander, I am afraid, would have a develish bad time of it. And for this reason, that while his extended line of communications with India would be by a single railway, with perhaps only a single line, the Russian line of communications would be by the Volga, the Caspian waterway giving the Russians power to pour swarms of troops against the force attempting to hold Krasnovodsk. The result, I am afraid, would

be a heavy smash at Krasnovodsk, and a retreat again upon Merv and Herat.

When I challenged Colonel Maurice last autumn in the *Morning Post* to come out of fogland and say in downright plain English what he did believe and what he did not believe in regard to Indian defence (I had read one of his letters very carefully several times, with the result that I was very much in the condition of Harry Furniss, to whom I once sent a Russian journal that had copied his sketches—he wrote back that he had "stood on his head half an-hour in the corner, but could not make anything of the Russ"—I was much in this preplexed condition after reading Colonel Maurice's letter) and, in reply, he said, with a pomposity worthy of a professor, that if he dealt with the subject at all, it would have to be in a book of great magnitude, not in a newspaper letter. However, Colonel Maurice has managed to say what he has to say in the limits of a short article in the *Fortnightly*, and the result is almost as unsatisfactory as on the last occasion. There is much buzzing in a quart pot, but on examination the pot is found to be practically empty. When a man is discursive, wordy, and wanders from his text he is apt to be surprised and furious at being asked to preach, as I once heard a Yankee express it, "God Almighty's truth straight from the shoulder!" That is what the professor cannot do, and he is uncommonly angry at being called upon in consequence to explain his explanation. Putting the plainest interpretation on what he says—it is equally open to anybody else to put other interpretations on his observations—he would appear to be convinced that salvation is only to be found for England by an alliance with Germany, Austria, and Italy against Russia. Add thereto Turkey, and I am willing to agree that we could march into St. Petersburg and Moscow and dictate terms to Russia. But I hold—and think every right-minded Englishman will hold—that the defence of India ought not to be based upon a paper compact, the treacherous failure of which by one or more of the allies might cause our downfall. German diplomacy is not so pure and honest that we can afford to stake our Imperial existence on so frail a foundation. We must have something better than that. The Imperial forces of England, and the plans of Imperial defence, must be so arranged and organized that England may be always a match for Russia single-handed. The "Indian Officer" attempts to solve this; but Colonel Maurice begs the question altogether by exclusively advocating the alliance with the Central European powers—a matter upon which politicians and the public need no guidance from a professor of military art. He travels over a good deal of other ground, and indulges in personal criticism of the "Indian Officer;" but I find nothing else in the article which I can seize upon and pass on to the public.

Granted the great combination of England, plus Germany, plus Austria, plus Turkey, plus Italy, and plus India against Russia, and the allies would be a poor lot if they did not march to Moscow, traverse the Caucasus, and perform other valiant deeds otherwise impossible ; but would it be to England's general interests to cripple Russia, and set up close to her doors a predominant Germany, who might try to serve her afterwards as Prussia served Austria after the Danish War? I, for one, think not. Meanwhile surely it would be better if, instead of railing at the press and public for being so ignorant, Colonel Maurice were to stick to his trade as professor of military art, and, leaving politics alone, show England how India is to be defended by military means against Russia, if Russia single-handed try to upset her authority between Quetta and Calcutta.

RESTLESSNESS ON THE AFGHAN FRONTIER.

LONDON, *February 21st, 1889.*

THE opinion prevalent among a large number of thinking men, not fanatically attached to any party, that it would be a wise thing to grant some sort of scheme of Home Rule to Ireland, if only for the sake of shunting and shelving a question affecting only a very small section of the Empire, and thereby enabling proper attention to be given to other matters of a far more important character, cannot but be strengthened by such circumstances as the present, when the forces of the Amir and the Czar are confronting each other, almost within hitting distance, and a state of things which might not impossibly involve England and Russia in war, and shake the fabric of Indian rule to its foundation, is relegated to obscure corners of the daily newspapers. Given a choice of two things, the loss of Ireland and the loss of India, and there are few educated Englishmen who (apart from the question of propinquity) would not agree that we could better afford to lose a dozen Irelands than a single India. Yet session after session is devoted to interminable discussions of Irish affairs, without any prospect of a settlement looming in sight, and in the meanwhile not only is home legislation blocked, but affairs of Imperial importance are left for the Colonial and Foreign Offices to muddle in the most approved parochial style. If, four years ago, the Afghan situation was considered grave when a mere handful of Cossacks and Afghans faced each other at Penjdeh, it surely cannot be regarded as wholly free from danger at the present moment when the Amir himself on one side of the River

Oxus, and General Komaroff on the other, command large forces in person, the defeat of either of which would be followed by anarchy in Turkestan or Afghanistan. The Czar himself may not contemplate a war, and easy-going minds detect a certainty of this in his attendance at Sir Robert Morier's ball this week (as if the Czar did not attend similar balls at the leading embassies at St. Petersburg every season), but it is not difficult to imagine a state of things which might cause Alexander III., with all his good intentions, to embark on undertakings offensive to this country. For instance, it is a simple matter of fact that both Alikhanoff and Komaroff look upon Afghanistan as a State to be pulled to pieces, and not to be infused with strength by any acts by Russia. Up to now, the weapon they have had to rely upon exclusively has been simply intrigue—a weapon in the use of which the Russians are adept, but which cannot be always successful, or Ishak Khan would be still leading the revolt at Mazar-i-Sherif. Now, however, they command forces able (in their estimation) to overcome the Amir, and which, if but slightly increased by troops from the Caucasus, could easily conquer and hold the whole country north of the Hindu Kush? Who will seriously contend that this possession of force, ripe for action within almost hitting distance of the Amir, does not constitute a powerful temptation to the Russian Generals in command? They have it in their power to work up any number of pretexts for attacking the Amir, and they know that if they do attack him he can receive no succour from India. A better opportunity for attacking him there could not be. At Kabul he is close to English aid: at Mazar-i-Sherif, while the snows block the Hindu Kush passes, he is at Russia's mercy. What a chance for the men who organized the seizure of Merv by a sudden blow that turned the Turcomans out of their independence! What an opportunity for the repetition of Penjdeh. Decidedly the Amir is in deadly peril, and if the Russians take no advantage of the situation, it will not be out of consideration for Abdurrahman Khan, or England, but because adverse circumstances in Europe have intervened.

It is interesting as showing the negative part the Caucasus is playing in the matter, that the Governor-General, Prince Dondukoff Korsakoff, is at St. Petersburg with several prominent members of his staff, and troubles very little about the affair. A few troops have been sent from the Caucasus, but in general the authorities of Turkestan and Turkmenia have the matter entirely in their own hands, receiving their instructions direct from General Vannoosky, the Minister of War. The Chief of the Staff of the army of observation at Kerki is General Grodekoff, who years ago performed a celebrated ride through Afghan-Turkestan to Herat, and afterwards served, as Chief of the Staff to Scobeleff, when the latter attacked

Geok Tepe. It may be remembered that in the account of his ride he laid great stress on the hatred of the Uzbegs towards the Afghans and their desire for independence. To promote that has since been the aim of Turkestan officials, who recognise that the severed province would naturally gravitate towards Russia. If the Amir be left unmolested he will stamp out disaffection so thoroughly that there will be no such favourable elements of revolt left in another month as existed a year ago. For the Russians in Turkestan, it must be galling to see the Amir crushing the embers of the fire they had done their best to ignite. Their only consolation is the belief they all entertain that the Amir is not destined to be long-lived, and if anything happens to him the country will at once be given over to anarchy. To prevent this, England ought to keep in touch with all the elements of a tranquilising character in Afghanistan, and this, as I insisted last week, can only be accomplished by having officials on the spot. I am not one of those who believe in a partition of Afghanistan between England and Russia. Military men are against sacrificing any portion of it to Russia, and our policy ought to be to endeavour to prevent any such partition, by gradually rendering the Russo-Afghan frontier the frontier of Russia and India. Russia will never shrink from encroaching on an Afghan frontier, but she will always hesitate before crossing the frontier of the Indian Empire. The task is a difficult one, but it is not impossible. India, indeed, is not the place for men who have such a word in their vocabulary. As yet nothing whatever has been done to build up this frontier.

It is with this policy that I am dissatisfied, and am convinced that the country will one of these days be dissatisfied with Lord Salisbury in regard to his negative policy in a manner that the Conservatives will probably regret for many a year. The plan I recommend is one that I have repeatedly insisted on during the last four years. We should begin first with our own dominions, and then gradually pass on to those of the Amir. Baluchistan, on the Persian side, still remains unorganised. Starting from the Persian Gulf a frontier cordon should be extended to the Helmund, and even if this were limited to a few posts, the presence of English officers along the border would render the frontier something more than those stupid paper frontiers which are still worshipped in Downing-street, in spite of the innumerable lessons as to their uselessness taught to England in the past. Baluchistan organised, and a hold established on the Helmund, the next step should be to induce the Amir to allow the cordon to be extended to the Hari Rud, and thence to the Oxus. At the outset Indian native officers might be employed on this task; but it is useless to expect Russians to give anything like the respect to a frontier supervised by Asiatics she

would to one controlled by Europeans. There is no necessity to hold the frontier in force. A dozen English officers extending from Seistan to the Oxus would form a European chain of sufficient moral strength to accomplish the great object in view—the education of Russia into realising that the recently delimited frontier is not simply the frontier of Afghanistan but the frontier of the British Empire. There is no reason why this should not be done in such a manner as to leave the Amir's rule absolutely intact. The objections to the presence of a British Resident at Herat, Kabul, and Mazar-i-Sherif do not apply in this case. These frontier officials would not need to enter those towns at all, or take any part in Afghan affairs. They would be, in the majority of instances, posted in places where the population is scanty and non-fanatical, while they would proceed on their duty and return by the nearest road along the frontier running from Seistan to the Oxus.

Such a cordon is the only easy and inexpensive method I can suggest for safeguarding the Afghan frontier from encroachment. It would impose a moral check the moment it was established, and could be gradually strengthened by other measures for promoting familiar relations between Afghanistan and India. If Afghanistan fell into anarchy, one section of officers as far as the Hari Rud would only have to cross the frontier to find an asylum in Persia, and the other section from Kushk to the Oxus, would be equally safe on entering Russia. I mention these contingencies, not because I believe we ought to be unduly influenced by them, but because the authorities at home and in India seem to have a pusillanimous fear (not shared by officers themselves) of placing any Englishmen in Afghanistan "lest there should be a rising." This funk of the Afghans is not a creditable feeling, and wants to be well purged from the official mind. If officials generally at home and India, would only drink more beer and imbibe less tea, a little more manliness might be infused into the management of the Empire. There is far too much nervousness rampant in high places nowadays. What with a want of pluck on the part of her rulers and the prevalence of corroding pessimism among her public writers, England hardly seems the same country to-day she was a century ago. If we do not dare something in Afghanistan we may make up our minds to lose a great deal. For my part I think that, taking the worst at the worst, it would be cheaper to lose two or three dozen frontier officers than to lose Herat. The one loss could be readily made up; the other never.

It is amazing the time and money English statesmen are content to expend on the manufacture and preservation of a mere paper frontier, while refusing to make a single effort to establish the proper article. The energy wasted in the one direction would be

sufficient to create a dozen frontiers if expended in the other. In this respect we differ curiously from the Russians, who cannot bear having any part of their Empire lying outside their beloved Cossack frontier cordon. They were never happy till they had encircled and enclosed Bokhara, and the Embassy that is now on its way to St. Petersburg is probably the last that will be sent from that Khanate. According to the best advices the Russians intend to pursue a steady policy of stultifying the Amir and by degrees reduce him and the Khan of Khiva to the insignificant condition of the Tartar and Persian Khans in Trans-Caucasia. The constant flow of Russians and Russian trade along the Transcaspian Railway, from the Caspian Sea to Samarkhand, will enable them without much difficulty to gradually wear down the independence of Bokhara. Meanwhile the letting down process is not being unduly hastened. The Asiatic Branch of the general staff has this week hired the whole of the Grand Hotel at St. Petersburg for the use of the Bokharan Embassy. The hotel is conveniently situated in sight of the Ministry of War, and within a few minutes walk of the principal public departments and palaces of the Russian capital. The Embassy is expected to stop at St. Petersburg several weeks.

General Kolpakovsky, Governor-General of the Government of the Steppe, is also expected to arrive at St. Petersburg to-day or to-morrow. He has been summoned in connection with fresh schemes of reorganization for the Central Asian possessions of Russia. General Annenkoff is likewise at St. Petersburg trying to get the Czar's sanction for the extension of the Transcaspian Railway to Tashkent. He is arranging for more rolling stock to be sent to Azoun Ada as soon as the ice breaks upon the River Volga next month. The valuable services the railway has rendered in enabling troops and stores to be rapidly concentrated on the Oxus have greatly enhanced his prestige. At the same time the military movement to Kerki has been useful in revealing further defects of the line which are to be immediately remedied, the money being readily forthcoming under the circumstances from the Russian exchequer. This, even if the political ferment subside in Afghan-Turkestan, will result in Russia being considerably strengthened on the frontier. I think I have more than once mentioned that the defects of the Transcaspian Railway revealed by the *Times* were principally due to the difficulty Annenkoff experienced in getting a proper sum for the construction of the line. It was a case of a very cheap railway or no railway at all Thanks to the scare (how far affected or real it is impossible to say) of an Afghan irruption into Bokhara, Annenkoff has been able to get all the extra money he needed to make the line a thoroughly sound one,



RUSSIA'S LAST SHIFT SOUTHWARDS.

LONDON, *March 28th, 1889.*

THE Russian press continues to publish vague rumours of a dangerous restlessness on the Afghan frontier, and all manner of reports are circulating at St. Petersburg; but nothing definite is known of anything serious, and those in authority scout the idea of further complications. I am, however, informed that the Russian Government, in spite of its pacific assurances, is by no means disposed to recur to a policy of masterly inactivity in that quarter. Further frontier organization has been decided upon in the upper portion of the River Oxus, and the time is rapidly approaching when fresh diplomatic wrangles will commence over that section of the Afghan border line. On this account, the Amir cannot put his house in proper order in that quarter too soon, and it would be of unspeakable benefit if he could be persuaded to allow two or three British officers to take up their stay in the more menaced positions until the Russian organization is accomplished. I am of opinion that very little pressure would be needed to induce the Amir to accede to such a course: but in recommending it, I naturally imply that we should not repeat the Penjdeh misadventure and send weaklings, such as Yate, who would merely flutter in the Russian breeze, but men with strong heads, strong hands, and strong hearts. There is far too much timidity in our Afghan policy. So long as Russia has simply to deal with Afghans north of the Hindu Kush, she will continue to regard it as an Asiatic province and not as a bulwark of the British Empire. I am aware that pessimist poltroons—mongrel Englishmen who are unworthy to possess a vote in the management of that great Empire which was founded by stout-hearted adventurers who cared nothing for long odds—I am aware that these poor whiff-of-wind look upon Herat and Afghan-Turkestan as lost before the Russians have even infracted the new frontier; but that is not the view of those possessing the old English quality of firmly confronting the gravest disadvantages and fighting cheerfully for victory, no matter how hard the tide of battle may rage against them. For my part, I hold to the conviction that there is not the least necessity for being down in the mouth about Afghan-Turkestan. Very little planning would be needed to erect there such a moral barrier to Russian encroachments as would, at any rate, stave off the period of annexation. I hesitate to go into details of a plan of action I would suggest, being reminded of a remark made by Sir Peter Lumsden to myself in 1885. "The worst of your books is that, in pointing out the dangers of the Russian

advance, you show the Russians precisely how to advance." "I am quite aware of that," I replied. "But what other course is open to me, unless I become an adviser to the Crown, and point out the same dangers to our statesmen in private?"

The Russians have a good plan of meeting cases of this kind. The moment a writer distinguishes himself in dealing with any topic of utility to the State he is attached to a public department in the capacity of a sort of outdoor or exterior adviser; and whenever his services are deemed necessary, he is called upon to advise the Minister or the bureacratic chief concerned. In return for this he receives a fee and an occasional decoration or title; and whenever departmental committees are formed to discuss any knotty question, from the rectification of a frontier to the suppression of swine fever, these authorities are summoned to assist, and receive special pay while in attendance. Thanks to this system, the Russian Government has at its command the cream of intellect, and is not compelled to found its policy on the skim milk of clerical incompetence. At the same time, an embargo is laid upon inconvenient discussions, and the Government can carry out its plans without any warning being given to the enemy in advance. In this country there is no such system at work. When a question arises at the Foreign or Colonial Offices, a clerk is set to work to collect in the library materials bearing upon it; and as he is mostly ignorant of the question, and possesses no personal interest in it, it can be readily imagined what sort of case is finally put before the Minister for him to base his decision upon. Up to now, it has never seemed to occur to the statesmen of England that they might utilize the resources of knowledge lying outside their offices. Yet the Russian system has been in vogue since the time of Peter the Great, and has been attended with admirable result. It is true that in this country a statesman can pick plenty of information out of the press—a plan impossible in Russia. On the other hand, this leaves intact the evil to which Sir Peter Lumsden referred, that, in forecasting, on a basis of hard fact, the future advance of an enemy, a writer tends to supply the enemy with ideas encouraging him to make the advance. Thus the more cogently one demonstrates the necessity for retaining Herat to safeguard India, and proves how easily Russia can mask it and rush on to the Helmund, the more one tempts Russia to take advantage of our supineness to rush upon that point.

Still, things being as they are, no other course is left open to me except to keep the public fully interested in the question, and I imagine that things would go hard with Lord Salisbury's Ministry if anything happened to Herat and Afghan-Turkestan. Meanwhile General Rosenbach has returned to Turkestan, and it is expected

that his arrival will be followed by some important changes in regard to the disposition of the Turkestan army. Kerki it is proposed to make a permanent military station, and a Russian cordon will be established along the course of the River Oxus. Under ordinary circumstances, some hesitation might have been felt at thus fringing South Bokhara with Russian troops, and depriving it of an independent frontier of her own alongside Afghan-Turkestan; but the recent scare having (as it is alleged) caused Bokhara to appeal to Russia to protect her with troops against the Amir, she can hardly complain if, under the pretext of further defence, Russia keeps a portion of those troops permanently installed in the same positions. In this manner, Bokhara will become as completely incorporated as Khiva; and Russia will not only secure what she has long wished for—a strong military position on the Oxus—but will be able to take in hand encroachments in Afghan-Turkestan should she desire to do so. Unless, therefore, the Russians retire from the Oxus line they occupied a short while ago under the influence of the scare, a a very important Russian advance will have been consummated without attracting the notice of English statesmen; and perhaps some justification will be found for the contention of those observers who from the outset believed that the scare was purposely fomented in order that Russia might shift her military alignment from the northern frontier of Bokhara to the southern.

Prince Mestchersky's paper, the *Grajdanin*, has published a long and rather sensational article this week under the title of "The Turcomans of the Transcaspian Territory as a Military Material." In this the author recites at length all that is known about the bravery of the Turcomans and the excellence of their steeds, and recommends the adoption of a measure that would compel every male to pass though the ranks, and enable Russia, "at the end of ten years, to launch one of the finest hordes of warriors the world has ever seen against her enemies, whether in the East or West." Perhaps because the author did not print it in the *Novoe Vremya*, that paper falls foul of it as a fantastic notion calculated to "load Russia with a swarm of Asiatic ruffians;" but all the same, the St. Petersburg press generally speaks well of the idea of using the Turcomans as irregular horse; and in so doing they are simply supporting what Skobeleff, in Russia, and Valentine Baker, in England, recommended years ago. Hitherto Russia has refrained from organizing the Turcomans to any extent, because she wished to consolidate first her position in the Transcaspian territory. It would be obviously a danger for Russia to drill thousands of Tekkes so soon after their conquest, and before the identical character of their interests had been absolutely established. A little later on it will be possible to do this, and Turcomans will be doubtless largely employed in the

next advance; but the men being born warriors and good riders to boot, there is no need of rushing too rapidly into grandiose enterprises of the description published by the Chauvinist *Grajdanin.*

The fuller report of General Annenkoff's lecture, just published, mentions that the attempts to grow foreign trees and shrubs along the course of the Transcaspian railway have not been a success, in consequence of which the Russian authorities are planting in bare places saxaul and other local trees. To protect saxaul from destruction for purposes of fuel, the existing forests are being placed under Government supervision, and no one is allowed to cut down any tree or shrub within five miles of the Transcaspian railway. In the *Kavkaz* I further note that General Annenkoff has made large purchases of seeds of trees, vegetables, and flowers for the Transcaspian territory. These will be planted wherever a Russian is permanently established on duty.

THE "FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW" AND INDIAN DEFENCE.

LONDON, *April 5th, 1889.*

SIR CHARLES DILKE has failed to finish his account of Indian defence in the current issue of the *Fortnightly Review*, and promises the most interesting part—the part dealing with the power of Russia to attack India—in a future number. In the meanwhile he makes one or two observations which are worth discussion. I was under the impression that he had returned to England disabused of that eccentric idea of his that we could bleed Russia to death at Vladivostock, but he still appears to stick to it. It is a pity the many military men he met in India did not tackle him on that point, and demonstrate to him the fallacy of his proposal. Some time ago I mentioned that Sir Charles Dilke took the idea (without acknowledgment) from my writings on Port Hamilton; but like Mr. Pecksniff and Martin Chuzzlewit's plan for a grammar school, he "has stuck a window in and spoilt it." My idea was simply this. In the event of a war with Russia, England would expect the fleet to do something. In the White Sea it could do practically nothing, as Russia no longer maintains a dockyard at Archangel, and her littoral commerce there hardly invites the attack of a gunboat. In the Baltic it would be useless for blockading purposes, since Russian corn, etc., would simply take the German Königsberg route—a route it already largely adopts—while if the fleet penetrated to the

Gulf of Finland to attack impregnable Cronstadt, it would probably suffer more from Russia's torpedoes and torpedo boats than it would effect damage in return. As to the Black Sea, the strongest blockade there would not prevent Russia from sending whatever troops she wanted from her home provinces across the Caspian to Afghanistan. Deprived, therefore, of any good work in the White, Baltic, and Black Seas, there would remain for the fleet only the distant target of the Pacific, and five years ago I repeatedly advocated that we should, in the event of a war, take possession of Vladivostock.

Sir Charles Dilke has not up to now gone into any details as to what the fleet could do in the Pacific against Russia and what Russia could do against the fleet; but this was what I actually did, pointing out in the articles on the question in the *Army and Navy Magazine* ("The value of Port Hamilton" and "Could we take Vladivostock?"), where the Russian population was the thinnest, how the existing settlements could be cut off, how we could utilize the Chinese population of the Usuri region, and so forth. These articles were translated into Russian, and provoked a rejoinder from General Tchernayeff. The hero of Tashkent had a fit of the blues on at the time—one of those fits that smashed up his second career in Turkestan in 1883—and he not only admitted all I had said about Russia's weakness in that quarter, but even went so far as to say that Russia had failed so completely in establishing herself in the Pacific that Vladivostock was not worth defending against an English attack. This led to onslaughts from those Russians who were interested in the Pacific, and General Tchernayeff had a very bad time of it. However, so far as I was concerned, the controversy was very useful in supplying me with additional data for my idea. I do not know whether I have mentioned the fact before; but often in the course of my political career, when I have wanted data about a disputed point, I have published a strong and striking article in an English magazine or newspaper, and, distributing it broadcast among the Russian press, have awaited with confidence the growth of a controversy which would provide me with the facts I wanted. This is one of the advantages of knowing Russian ways, as well as knowing the Russian language. From first to last the Tiflis semi-official newspaper, *Kavkaz*, has published some sixty or seventy articles on my "Russia's power of attacking India," and as might have been expected has divulged, in so doing, facts and opinions about the Russian position in the Caucasus, Russia's aims in Persia, her transport power in the Caspian, of very considerable value to myself. In the case of Vladivostock, I was similarly successful. The Russian Government, however, took the alarm, and pressed on defensive preparations at Vladivostock

with such rapidity that the task of attacking would be ten times more difficult than five years ago. All the same, I still believe we could sponge Russia out of the Pacific.

In that case I pointed out in 1883, although we should not, by the seizure of Vladivostock, influence in the least the movement of a single soldier from Moscow to Merv, we should have something to use as a diplomatic set-off the moment Russia began to tire of attacking us on the Indian frontier. To me it seemed quite obvious that if the British Army failed to keep Russia out of India, the success of the British fleet at Vladivostock would lose much of its value, since Russia, in dictating terms in India, would simply have to demand our departure from the Pacific as one of the terms of peace to compel our acquiescence. Now Sir Charles Dilke, who is too much given to doctrinaire views, has seized upon the idea of attacking Russia at Vladivostock, and carried it to lengths which are absolutely preposterous. Russia has not got a single vein of any size running to the Pacific. Yet he speaks of saving India by "bleeding Russia to death at Vladivostock." One might just as well talk of bleeding a powerful, healthy man to death by amputating his little toe. The occupation of the whole of Siberia, from Vladivostock to Tobolsk, would not have the slightest effect on the fighting in Afghanistan. Russia would fight on grimly smiling, knowing full well that the capture of Quetta would be worth a hundred Vladivostocks. Sir Charles Dilke makes the great mistake of mixing up Russia's sentimental interest in the Pacific with her assumed material interest. Material interest she has hardly any at all. She could afford to be wiped out of the Pacific coast for ten, twenty, or forty years. It would not diminish by a single jot or tittle the nourishment which the moujiks of Russia proper provide for the vermin that infest them. I mean by this that not a single Russian peasant would be in any respect the worse off in substance for the loss of the Pacific. So far as the Russian Government is concerned, it would look upon the loss of Vladivostock with the utmost serenity, providing things were going on tolerably well in Afghanistan, because it would know that, by dint of constant pegging away at the Indian defences, it could hope to smash us in time, and then Vladivostock would come back again to Russia without a single shot being fired on the Usuri of Amoor.

This, which is clear enough to every Russian with whom I have discussed the subject, and to every English military man I have met as well, is either not apparent to Sir Charles Dilke, or else, for sake of consistency, he refuses to see it. Sir Charles Dilke, I am afraid, belongs to that large class of men who, having once expressed an opinion in print, feel it a matter of honour and reputation to stick to it, no matter how erroneous or stupid they may

subsequently find it to be. For my part I have a contempt for consistency of this sort. What we English all aim at, or profess to aim at, is the proper safeguarding of India from Russian attack; and in order that this may be accomplished by some simple and certain method, we ought to do our utmost to simplify the problem, and not clog the road of discussion with fads or fossilized opinion. If Sir Charles Dilke really does believe that we can bleed Russia to death at Vladivostock, he should show in detail how this is to be done. If the opinion is no longer tenable, he should throw it overboard and not stick to it simply because Colonel Maurice exposed its fallacy when first pronounced. When Sir Charles Dilke talks of Russia fighting "as tenaciously for Vladivostock as for Petersburg itself," he betrays an ignorance of the views of Russian military and naval men out of place in an article insisting so repeatedly on his knowledge of Russia and Russian politics. In the event of such a seizure, Russia would not deflect from the Volga a single man she had previously ordered to march to India; and there is absolutely nothing in common between Sebastopol and Vladivostock, as he tries to make out. The material prosperity of Russia would immediately suffer if she were expunged from the Black Sea; but one has only got to look at the list of Russian exports from the Pacific littoral to see how little the loss of Vladivostock would injure the sum and total of Siberian trade.

But in one of the opinions expressed in the current issue of the *Fortnightly*, I certainly find myself in accord with Sir Charles Dilke. The latter does not believe that either Conservatives or Liberals would consummate that alliance, offensive and defensive, with Germany, Austria, and Italy, which Colonel Maurice would have us stake the defence of India upon. If, in spite of the utmost pressure, Lord Salisbury has felt himself unable to propose such an alliance to the public, it is not likely that the Liberals, who are averse to foreign alliances altogether, will ever attempt to do what Lord Salisbury cannot do. The attitude Colonel Maurice takes up is this—"India can only be defended if England signs the treaty of alliance with the Central Powers. If England refuses, her blood must be on her head for her stupidity." But this is the attitude of a faddist. "We may have the alliances of the powers or we may not," observes Sir Charles Dilke. "If we have them, our task will be comparatively easy; but that which is worth discussion and worth preparation is the more likely future in which we shall have to struggle with Russia without receiving aid." Quite so; but although it is pointed out to such men as Colonel Maurice that there are cogent reasons against joining unreservedly any alliance against Russia (the danger for certain of Germany using it for her European and Colonial schemes), they continue to dance like

a howling Dervish upon the topic, and refuse to deal with the really military aspect of the problem in the sense Sir Charles Dilke and the public with him desire.

The new Amir of Bokhara, Seyid Abbul, has engaged a Russian electrician, named Hazaroff, to fit up his palace with the electric light. It is noteworthy that the Bokharan mission at St. Petersburg has been more struck with electricity than anything else the members have yet seen. Perhaps, however, this is not remarkable, since civilized man is just as much impressed by electric novelties as the inhabitants of Central Asia. I had the pleasure of witnessing the University boat race last week from one of the numerous electric launches now plying on the Thames, and, as far as I could see, these launches provoked more interest than anything during the weary period of waiting for the race. There is something very uncanny in the sight of a pleasure launch proceeding through the water without any assistance from oars, sails, and steam. The crowd was very much impressed by these vessels, which ranged in size from the ordinary boat to the full-grown pleasure launch, Viscountess Bury, having nearly a hundred passengers on board. Messrs. Immisch and Company, who have brought them to great perfection, have established charging stations on the Thames to charge the motors, and owners therefore experience no difficulty in procuring power when they need it. In appearance the launches have nothing to indicate their source of power, the motors being placed out of sight under the seats running down the side of the vessel. Three small handles at the end are all that have to be manipulated, and the result is a rapid easy pace, without smell or smoke, heat or dust, or any of the other obnoxious features of steamers.

THE RUSSIANS ON THE OXUS.

London, *April 11th, 1889.*

IT is quite clear now from the Chardjui telegrams published by the Russian press during the past week that we must look upon the Russians as finally established at Karki. Kerki the place has hitherto been spelt in England and India; but the Russians long ago in their maps dubbed it Karki, and as the place is now theirs, and is united by a wire with the European telegraph system, Karki is perhaps the form that had better be used in the future. In general I am not in favour of special or pedantic methods of spelling geographical names. The *Daily Telegraph* has latterly attempted a revolution in a small way by spelling Vienna "Wien," and Cologne

"Köln," but the country is not ripe for a sweeping improvement of the kind yet, and I am not surprised at seeing the innovation denounced generally by the press. Some day, when everybody takes to travelling, and school geographies are prepared by "eminent hands" instead of by the conceited riff-raff of the educational world, a wholesale revision may take place—and take place very appropriately; but the present moment is a little too premature for such a change, no matter how glaring may be the anomalies that exist. Differences in the method of spelling foreign places are the bane of every author who attempts to write a book on strange countries. In preparing some of my Central Asian works, I experienced constant trouble of this kind, Central Asian names being often spelt half a dozen different ways by different authors. The rule I adopted was to always follow the current spelling of the English press, except in the case of absolutely fresh words, when I felt that I might perhaps lead the fashion myself. In delivering lectures I have also always followed the popular pronunciation, for a simple reason. In lecturing to people, the main object is to keep them to one's chain of ideas and allow nothing to divert them from it if possible. To put the matter in the concrete, a lecturer wishes, say, to impress upon the audience the strategic value of Cabul. Instead of concentrating their whole attention upon the strategic value by allowing nothing peculiar to intervene between his mind and theirs, he insists, just to show off his knowledge of the country or to please a lot of pedants, on calling Cabul "Caubul," and calls it a hundred times "Caubul" in the course of his lecture. What is the natural result? Stand at the door and listen to the remarks as the people flock out. "Interesting lecture to-night!" "Very." "Didn't know it was called Caubul before. I've always called it Cabul." "So everybody calls it, but I suppose the Afghans sound the word that way; he ought to know; he says he's been there," etc., etc. And so everbody goes home remembering vividly that Cabul has been called Caubul, while the chief aim of the lecture—the insistance on the strategic value of Cabul—is relegated to a lower level of the memory, and is perhaps forgotten altogether. Therefore, to prevent anything of the kind occurring, I always call places what the audience happens to call them; and so long as they go away with the aim and object of my lecture driven to the hilt into their memory, I do not care a button-shank what offence I may have given to the pedants present. Besides the very persons who would insist on pronouncing Cabul "Caubul" at a lecture would hesitate to pronounce Paris as the French people pronounce their capital for fear of being laughed at by the audience as affected ninnies.

But where a word is young in the language, and Kerki has not been used many times yet, an attempt may judiciously be made

to enforce the employment of the right rendering. Kerki is probably the proper Bokharan term; but the Russians are going to make the place a Russian locality, and as the inhabitants are to be Russian, and will follow the official designation of the new settlement, I think that an effort should be made to call it Karki for the future. The case is a little different with Penjdeh, which the Russians always call "Pendeh," minus the j. By rights, I suppose, we ought also to follow the Russians and call the spot "Pendeh;" but Penjdeh has been so impressed by a certain humiliation and shame into English speech and English history that it would not be an easy matter to replace it by the current Russian term. It is to Penjdeh that General Komaroff has just gone on a tour of inspection, calling at Sarakhs on the way. Karki lies outside the sphere of Transcaspia, and has been visited instead by General Rosenbach, who made the voyage to the place in the steamer Tzar. Karki is practically the navigable head of the Oxus. Once or twice erroneous paragraphs have appeared in the English press to the effect that steamers have failed in penetrating to the point. As a matter of fact, the journey is constantly and regularly being done by the Tzar and Tzaritza, two shallow draught stern-wheel steamers which manage the trip between the railway bridge at Chardjui and the new settlement at Karki without any special difficulty. Once or twice they have grounded; but this is nothing to speak of on a river which has not yet been properly surveyed and staked, and the shoals of which, like those of the southern section of the Volga, change every flood. The Russians are only now getting a grip on the Oxus. By degrees they will organise and control the river, and, while confining the course to its proper channel, will utilize the extensive surplus during the floods to fill up the basin and irrigate the country lying in the direction of the Caspian.

The Russian Society for the Development of Trade—a Society which does as much real business as the whole of our Chambers of Commerce put together—has just appointed a Committee to report upon various schemes for irrigating the country between the Oxus and Caspian. General Ignatieff, who in spite of living in official retirement, is still a weighty political personage, is the president of this Society, and takes a great interest in these irrigation schemes. A long, and I am afraid a tedious, article might be written upon the different projects under investigation; but the aim and purport of most of them is to carry off the surplus waters of the Oxus during the flood season and store them for irrigation purposes in the Transcaspian desert during the summer heats. The general idea, it will be seen, is quite different from the older project—a project going back to the time of Peter the Great—of diverting the Oxus actually into the Caspian and extending the

Volga-Caspian waterway to Bokhara. This waterway project is no longer so popular as it was some ten or twelve years ago. Fewer people believe in the possibility of steamers running from Krasnovodsk to Karki and Khiva. On the other hand, it has been tolerably well demonstrated that a considerable area of land lying between Chardjui and Merv can be converted from a desert into a smiling oasis by diverting the spare water of the Oxus eastward. There are those who even hope—and I am one of the number—that what with this diversion of the Oxus and the fuller utilization of the waters, of the Murghab and Tejend, it will be possible to establish in time a band of cultivated country the whole distance from the Caspian to the Oxus, with perhaps even a shallow stream running the whole of the way. This is what, at any rate, the Russians seem disposed to create; and it requires no very great discernment to recognise the important effect the establishment of this irrigated highway will have upon the military position, as well as upon the growth of European civilisation in the country.

Beyond the announcement of the formation of the new Russian settlement of Karki, the Russian press has furnished no details as yet of the place. These however may be expected before long, and there is every reason to believe that the place will figure pretty frequently in the newspaper telegrams of the future. Askabad, Sarakhs, Penjdeh, Karki—Karki dominates the final point of the new Russo-Afghan frontier; and if Askabad is a stepping-stone to Meshed and Penjdeh to Herat, Karki may be regarded as the stepping-stone to Andkhoi and Mazar-i-Sherif. In the meanwhile, it controls the intercourse between Bokhara and Afghanistan, extends the Cossack cordon along most of the southern frontier of Bokhara, and opens up the highway between the Oxus end of the new frontier and Samarkhand. The development of the place cannot but endanger the security of the Afghan district of Kham i-ab; and the sooner a British official is placed in charge of that menaced corner of Afghanistan the better. Besides the troops located there, the Russians mean to provide the place with peasent inhabitants, and also stimulate the silk industry. The commercial value of the place, however, is relatively insignificant compared with the political and military significance of the establishment of a regular garrison dominating the whole of Southern Bokhara as well as Afghan-Turkestan. Yet the move has been hardly noticed at all in this country.

Other items of news from Transcaspia testify to the energy of Russia in that quarter. Locomotive-repairing shops have been opened during the past week at Kizil Arvat, which for the future will serve as the building and repairing point of the rolling-stock of the Transcaspian railway. At Azoun Ada three times as much

Bokharan cotton is awaiting shipment this spring as last year; and the Caucasus and Mercury Company is putting on five new steamers to meet the increased Caspian traffic this season. Azoun Ada has been erected into a first-class customs station, and an order has been issued imposing a general duty of 2½ per cent. *ad valorem* on all European, Anglo-Indian, and Persian goods crossing the frontier of the Transcaspian territory. As might have been expected, a custom-house has been established at Karki. From Tashkent comes the news that a Cotton Congress will assemble there this month to discuss the development of the cotton industry in Central Asia. At Askabad an orthodox cathedral is being erected, and not far from the Russian town 300 acres of ground have been laid out for the cultivation of tobacco. According to Askabad advices, the new Russian Consul-General, M. Vlasoff, has been well received by the people and officials at Meshed. Trade between Askabad and Meshed is rapidly on the increase, and caravans can pass between the two places without the slightest fear of thieves. Extensive progress is being made with the irrigation works in connection with the Tzar's domain on the Murghab, Chinese labourers to the extent of several hundreds having been imported by the Russians from Kuldja. The Chinese and the Turcoman get on very well together; but it is not contemplated to retain the Celestials permanently on the spot, the intention being to colonise the million acres of reclaimed land with peasants from Russia as soon as the place is ready to receive them. General Annenkoff, as well as the Controller of the irrigation works, Colonel Kozel Poklevsky, is strongly in favour of the Russian colonization of the Murghab region, and it is no secret that the Emperor fully shares their views in the matter. The settlement of several thousand Russian families will stiffen the frontier considerably at this point, which is the main object in view.

THE POLITICAL NIGHTINGALE SINGS IN THE CITY.

LONDON, *May 31st, 1889.*

EVERYBODY has been charmed with the delightful speech Lord Dufferin delivered in the city on Wednesday. The late Viceroy of India painted everything in pretty colours, and his pictures of English rule in the East not only fascinated the full-fed and wine-flushed audience at the Mansion House at night, but entranced the city-bound newspaper readers the next morning. The speech

was a model after-dinner speech. There was not a dyspeptic note in it. Such sweet singing by a statesman, who owes much of his success to his tunefulness as a political nightingale, is not often heard in this country, where, outside the ranks of the bawling bagmen of the two parties of the State who cry up their Conservative or Liberal wares in their own coarse fashion, the general tendency is to pipe tearfully to Pessimism. Climatically, existence is dull enough in England without people going out of their way to make it duller. However, of late years the croakers have been in the ascendant, and, notwithstanding the sweet singing of Lord Dufferin, the confession must be made that they have a deal to croak for. Speaking generally, the Empire is flourishing enough. The Colonies are racing ahead in a manner that provokes the envy of every European Power. But while the people (with a big P) who are governed are vigorous and lusty enough, it cannot but be gainsaid that the people (with a little p) who govern them have become increasingly afflicted with the palsy of irresolution and infirmity of purpose. It would not do to have too many nightingales. From the diplomatic standpoint, it is well that countries should sing sweetly to each other; but John Bull is drowsy enough at the best of times without needing tuneful lullabies to render him still more inactive and supine in putting his Empire in a proper condition of defence. The references of the late Viceroy to the friendly attitude of Russia were in the highest degree judicious. It is unwise for England to keep on nagging at her northern neighbour. Her proper course is to pursue the even tenor of her way in building up a defensive barrier in Afghanistan, accepting with a smiling face the protestations of the Russians, while her sons keep well burnished bayonets on the Indian frontier. But the very optimism of Lord Dufferin in regard to Russia's pacific intentions rendered all the more significant his insistance that she should not be allowed, even at the risk of war, to cross the new frontier defined by Sir Peter Lumsden and Sir West Ridgeway. My Conservative readers will at once say—Well, she will not do so, so long as Lord Salisbury remains Prime Minister; but if Mr. Gladstone comes into office again, then the new frontier will not be worth six months' purchase! On the contrary, it is Lord Salisbury himself who requires to be stiffened by the starch of public vigilance. It is no secret that he is actually endangering the integrity of the frontier by his wavering tone. He may not proclaim his pessimistic view that we have lost Herat from the political house-tops, but he certainly does not hold his tongue in private. Such an injudicious attitude is one calculated to invite that infraction which it should be the aim of all English statesmen, in public or in private, to sternly prohibit. Lord Dufferin's resolute words in this respect carried with them a significance that was lost upon those who were not behind the scenes.

It is not for me to devote this letter to comments that can be more fitly supplied by Indian readers themselves; but his speech contained one statement to which I have been compelled to take exception in very plain language in the English press. That statement was this:—"The absurd rumours propagated by the press as to the hostile intentions of the Amir of Afghanistan against Russia, which were never for a moment credited by the Russian Government, have been shown to be completely imaginary, the Amir himself acknowledging that he had nothing to complain of in the conduct of the Russian officials, and that his only desire is to remain at peace within his own borders." To this I have made the following reply:—

"Lord Dufferin's statement reflecting on the press is so little in accordance with actual facts that it must have been uttered in an inadvertent moment The rumours he refers to were published first in the St. Petersburg papers in the shape of telegrams from Chardjui on the Oxus. From Chardjui they could only have been sent by some Russian official, the Russian press having no correspondents there, and at any rate were subjected to the censorship of the local military chief. The rumours, therefore, were not propagated by the press, as Lord Dufferin states, but by the Russian authorities in Central Asia.

"If Lord Dufferin is correct that those 'absurd rumours' were never for a moment credited by the Russian Government, why did the Russian Government send to Chardjui Colonel Alikhanoff, from Merv, and General Komaroff, from Askabad; and why was a considerable body of troops marched from Samarkhand to Karki on the Oxus to resist the alleged intention of the Amir to invade Bokhara? These things were openly reported by the Russian official press, and their accuracy in beyond controversy.

"If Lord Dufferin had attempted to solve the enigma why, if the Russian Government 'never for a moment credited the absurd rumours propagated by the press,' regarding the Amir's contemplated invasion of Bokhara, they nevertheless, three months ago, massed a large force at Karki close to the new frontier, his speech, I fear, would have lost some of its optimist ring; for the real answer is this—that the Russian Government, never believing rumours which its own servants had set on foot, utilised this purposely manufactured pretext to shift its Turkestan frontier forces from the north border of Bokhara to the south, from the Samarkhand line to the Oxus line. In other words, Russia advanced the frontier guards of the Turkestan army 200 miles nearer India.

"Karki, a Bokharan ferry, ostensibly occupied to defend Bokhara against Afghanistan, has since been declared by General

Rosenbach (*vide* Russian official telegrams) to be 'a Russian settlement,' and is held by a military force. Russia now mans the South Bokharan frontier instead of the north, as was the case before she propagated the 'absurd rumours' Lord Dufferin ascribes to the press; her Turkestan army has been brought in closer contact with her Transcaspian army, threatening equally Mazar-i-Sherif and Herat, and, by the opening up of a new military road from Samarkhand to Karki, the khanate of Bokhara, already split in two by the Transcaspian railway, has been divided afresh, and her trade with Afghanistan placed under Russian control."

"If to this be added that 5,000 Uzbeg families, numbering 15,000 souls subject to the Amir, have also, according to the Russian official journal, crossed the Oxus and joined the Russians in their new position, it will be seen that, so far from there having been recently some 'absurd rumours propagated by the press,' there has been, in point of fact, an actual Russian military advance of great political significance, placing the Samarkhand troops in convenient propinquity to the disturbed Afghan territory north of the Hindu-Koosh and fourteen days march closer to Kabul."

Such was the letter I forwarded yesterday to the *Times*, with a sketch map for the editor (to save him the trouble of referring to an atlas), the *Times* having prominently propagated more than once the rumours referred to. However, it is crowded out this morning by the interminable Irish question. For the sake of Ireland, to which is assigned sixteen columns, the *Times* has cut down this morning its own foreign telegrams to one and-a-half columns and Reuter's to half a column. Everything else, of course, has suffered in proportion. If this engrossing attention to Irish affairs seemed calculated to lead to a solution of the Irish question satisfactory to the Irish and honourable to ourselves, I should be the last to complain at the *Times* rendering itself a mere Irish parish magazine; but, as I said last week, nothing substantial as yet has come of this excessive devotion to Irish matters; and, in the meanwhile, the *Times* begrudges Imperial affairs the smallest space in its columns. One hears on all sides the complaint—"Oh, what's the use of writing to the *Times* on any other topic except Ireland; your letters won't be inserted;" On myself this exercises no discouragement, because I have become hardened against failure; but it certainly discourages more sensitive students of Indian and Colonial affairs, and they submit tamely to be shoved off the platform of the *Times* by a lot of wild Irishmen skirmishing with the editor and the Government. Well did Lord Dufferin declare that, compared with the problems India provides for solution, "the questions for the most part occupying the attention of the House of Commons are the merest child's play."

The Russian papers this week contain an important telegram from Chardjui to the effect that General Resenbach, Governor-General of Turkestan, in closing the Congress of Cotton-growers at Tashkent, announced that the Russian Government had decided in principle to extend the Samarkhand line to Tashkent. The line, he added, will not run direct, but make a bend towards Ferghana.

WILL RUSSIA RESPECT THE AFGHAN FRONTIER?

LONDON, *June 5th, 1889.*

LORD SALISBURY would do a good thing if he employed one of the thirty-one officers who have just passed an examination in the Russian language to translate for him the comments of the Russian press on Lord Dufferin's speech. Repeatedly I have drawn attention to the fact that Russia looks upon the Afghan frontier with totally different eyes from our own. Years ago the Russian Government frequently declared that it had no intention of going to Merv. In England, the construction put upon this was that Russia would never have an intention to go to Merv; and therefore Merv would never be occupied by Russia. But this was an assumption altogether uncalled for. It does not necessarily follow that because one has no intention to-day, therefore he will have no intention to-morrow. To put the case in another form. I meet Jones to-day, and he says to me; "Do you intend to ever visit the Burmese oilfields?" I reply: "No; I have no intention whatever, I was once nearly stunk to death by the oil fumes at Baku, and that is enough for a life-time." To-morrow, however, I meet Brown, and circumstances having changed in the meantime, I find myself in the position of intending to go to Burma at once, and tell him so. Would Jones in that case be justified in saying: "Marvin is not a man of his word; he told me yesterday he had no intention at all of proceeding to Burma?" Certainly not! Well, that was very much the case with Merv. Instead of the English Government endeavouring to protect Merv, by bringing it within the Afghan fold, it adopted the cheap and useless expedient of incessantly sending messengers to M. de Giers to ask what Russia was doing in Central Asia, and whether she intended occupying Merv. The bland answer, always forthcoming, was that Russia was up to no games at all in the East, and that the Emperor had no intention at all of annexing Merv. However, there came at last a time when the Emperor did have an intention, and Merv was suddenly occupied one morning to the

vexation and consternation of Downing-street. Then the statesmen and politicians of England who had tempted Providence and Russia by leaving Merv open to seizure unanimously agreed, in solemn conclave, that the Russians were given to lying and could not be trusted any more.

Five years have barely elapsed since the historic Merv debate took place, and, in spite of Russia's constant protestations that she does not regard, and never has regarded, the new Afghan Frontier as a permanent one, the authorities at home act on the assumption that the frontier is tolerably safe from infraction. What they may think is perhaps a different matter. But they seem to be all agreed on one thing—that Russia could not cross the new frontier without exposing herself to the fresh taunt of being a barbarous non-respector of treaties. Certainly, Lord Dufferin holds this view. In his speech of May 29th he said :—"I desire to seize this opportunity of publicly recognising the loyal and honourable manner in which the Government of Russia has observed and maintained its obligations arising out of the Afghan Demarcation Convention—(cheers.) Before assuming the Viceroyalty, I ventured to prophesy that this would be the case, for I had the utmost confidence in the wisdom and moderation of the Russian Foreign Minister, and, above all, in the high sense of honour and conscientiousness of His Majesty the Emperor— (cheers.)………There is no doubt that had the Russian Government condescended to falsify its engagements and to intrigue against Abdur Rahman Khan, the affairs of Afghanistan might have been thrown into the utmost confusion—a circumstance which could not fail to be productive of the most critical complications as between ourselves and Russia ; for I hold it to be an essential principal that, under no conceivable circumstance, would it be compatible either with the good faith of the contracting parties or the safety of the Empire, that the agreement come to by us with Russia, on behalf of the Amir, in regard to the northern boundary of Afghanistan, should ever be modified or ignored." Here, it will be seen, Lord Dufferin first extols the good faith of Russia ; then declares that Russia could never infract the new frontier without violating that good faith ; and finally warns us that, if Russia did violate that good faith, the Empire would be immediately in danger. This warning was given in the plainest language, for he went on to say that "Any further approach of a great foreign military power towards the confines of India would entail upon the latter country such an intolerable amount of expense, in the shape of additional fortifications and other measures of defence, as would become absolutely intolerable, and would be less preferable than any other alternative however serious." So that, if Russia were to occupy Herat, for instance, it would be better to go to war with her for the place

than to allow her to entail intolerable defensive burdens upon us by approaching so close to the Indian confines.

Well, I do not know what may be thought in India of this ; but it seems to me that, if the safety of the Empire would be endangered by the infraction of the new frontier, the security of that frontier ought not to depend upon the good faith of Russia only but upon the glitter of English steel. "Trust is a good dog," says an old adage "but Holdfast is better." That is what I say. By all means trust Russia. "Fill your glasses gentlemen, and let all drink to the health of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias; but ahem ! don't forget to keep your left hand fixed upon your revolvers." Lord Dufferin speaks of the Afghan frontier treaty as one to be never broken, or even modified, by Russia. On the other hand, the *Novœ Vremya* of June 1st , with equal plainness, says :—"The Afghan convention is nothing more than a temporary compromise, and Lord Dufferin would have done better to have admitted it when, under the guise of a puff of the Russian Sovereign and his Minister for Foreign Affairs, he uttered a warning against Russia."

It cannot be too clearly understood that this is not a new position Russia is taking up. Before a single word of the treaty was put to paper ; Russia declared again and again that she looked on the arrangement as only a temporary one. She declared this again on the morrow of the signatures, and has candidly said so at frequent intervals since, so that there is no deception about her attitude. "The new Afghan frontier," continues the *Novoe Vremya*, "does not in the least represent a line which Russia must never cross. Afghanistan, on the contrary, constitutes an intermediate ground on which, at many points, new Anglo-Russian agreements may be raised." This surely is plain enough. If Russia incessantly tells us that she does not intend to always observe the new frontier, on what ground ought we to take it for granted, as Lord Dufferin does that she does intend to always observe it ? To do so is both illogical and unwise. Diplomatically, the speech of Lord Dufferin's was most judicious, and his Lordship meant his observations to be taken in a diplomatic sense ; but the question that arises is this— Does not England act as though she really believed the frontier to be safe from infraction ? What is she doing to safeguard the Helmund-Seistan region, so close to her doors, let alone Herat and Mazar-i-Sherif, more distant ? Absolutely nothing ! A powerful Russian raiding party could be down on the Helmund line of defence before our Quetta troops had half provided for its security. I am ready to agree that the frontier of India requires to be solidly built up ; that it is necessary to complete the consolidation of the Quetta stronghold before going ahead in force rashly ; but, surely, if

Lord Dufferin's statement be true, that the new frontier is as essential to the security of India as Quetta, it is unwise to give our whole attention to Quetta and none to Herat. What we ought to do is to imitate General Todleben at Sevastopol. That clever officer, when he saw the allied troops preparing to hem in and attack Sevestopol, went out and occupied all the good positions he could. Many were obviously too far out to be at once properly defended, but his object was sufficiently served if he managed to keep the enemy from occupying those advantageous positions. Had he not occupied them, the allies would have occupied them; therefore it was better to risk being turned out of them than incur the certainty of hostile occupation if his men did not put in an appearance, Now this is precisely a policy which I have recommended for years should be adopted in regard to the Afghan frontier. I have been always ready to admit that we could not at once defend the Herat camping-ground, and that if Russia went to war, we should incur the risk of being driven back; but, on the other hand, I have always asserted that it was better to incur this minor risk than incur the major risk of loosing Herat altogether, since the mere fact of our being in actual possession would diminish the keenness of the temptation on the part of Russia to seize unoccupied territory Lord Dufferin says we must not, at any cost, even at the cost of war, lose the new frontier. If, therefore, we ought to go to war to recover it, why not do something to protect it before it is actually lost? Should this not be clear enough to the dullest comprehension!

It is a mistake to imagine that Herat can only be protected by marching 10,000 men to the spot. There are moral barriers that serve their purpose very well until material ones can be erected. Russia will never respect indefinitely the Asiatic *khalat*, but she will hesitate before the scarlet tunic of the British soldier. Ten British officers and 100 British soldiers, distributed at points between Kuhsan, on the Herat-Meshed road, and Kham-i-Ab, on the Oxus, would do more to keep Russia from infracting the frontier than any amount of diplomatic expostulation at St. Petersburg. Their lives would be safe enough; and even if every man was liable to be murdered, it would surely be better to risk the loss of 100 men than by a war for the purpose of recovering a lost frontier, risk the loss of 100,000. I must frankly confess that I do not understand, and have only a limited confidence in, the present military plans for defending India. If Herat and Furrah were of no value, I could understand the Metzifying of Quetta; but Lord Dufferin, who, I presume, was acquainted with these plans, declares that the loss of those outer points, as well as Quetta, would endanger India, and that we must fight to recover them if Russia occupies them. When I question officers as to what they would do if

Russia "rushed" Herat, they reply: "We should immediately march from Quetta to Kandahar and fight them somewhere on the Helmund." "Then the Plevna business," I enquire, "would not be at Quetta which we are elaborately fortifying, but would be on the river Helmund?" "Yes," is the usual answer. "Then," I reply, "the matter resolves itself into this: Both England and Russia would race to the Helmund, and you risk a life-and-death conflict on the chance of getting there first. But suppose Russia, by the swiftness of her swoop, gets there first and occupies your proposed Plevna, of what avail will be on the Helmund the massive fortifications you have reared at Quetta and left behind you?" This is usually a poser. If the fighting is to take place on the Helmund, why not take up a position in good time, instead of trying to breast the flowing tide of invasion with harum-scarum earthworks thrown up when the Cossacks are already in sight? We are taking monstrous care of Qnetta; but I do not gather that the great game for the possession of India is to be played at Quetta, but "somewhere in Seistan or on the Helmund." Yet we are as indifferent to that fighting spot as if it were as safe from Russian seizure as Timbuctoo or Terra del Fuego. That is not sound policy, in my opinion. If the Afghan frontier is as indispensible to the security of India as Lord Dufferin declares it to be, then either I must charge Lord Dufferin with criminal neglect for not providing for the adequate safeguarding of that frontier while Viceroy, or I must lay the charge at the door of Lord Salisbury. Until evidence is forthcoming to the contrary, I must insist on what I have repeatedly insisted before—that there was no sound reason for withdrawing the British officers from the Afghan Frontier when the delimitation was finished. On some pretext or other, they should have been fixed to the frontier permanently; and this could have been done, I believe, in such a fashion as to altogether meet the wishes of the Amir. Perhaps Lord Dufferin did not feel as strongly on the point then as he does now. It is a lamentable feature of English political life that statesmen are commonly only vigorous when out of office. Their supineness when they really have power must make the gods sick. What Lord Lansdowne may think of the frontier is at present unknown to me; but if he shares the views of the late Viceroy, is it not fair to put to him the question which Lord Dufferin's speech presses home to the heartcore of every patriotic Englishman—What is to be done, and done immediately to, prevent the Russians from infracting the new frontier? Evasion of this vital question may mean for us in a year or two an Afghan Sedan.



SERVICE BETWEEN ST. PETERSBURG AND SAMARKHAND.

LONDON, *June 13th, 1889.*

LONG before the Russians occupied Merv, I pointed out that although, in consequence of our communications with India being entirely of a marine character, we cannot appreciably abridge the distance between London and Karachi, our northern rivals are able to shorten the period required for attacking Herat and Kandahar by every improvement they make with their railways. This shortening process is always going on. Ten years ago the Caspian was a sort of Dead Sea : now it is alive with the bustle and activity of a Canadian lake. Even five years ago the Russian Government ordered a committee of naval and military men to sit in solemn conclave to decide whether four transports should be built for military purposes in the Caspian Sea or not. Now there are so many private steamers running that the Russian Government does not concern itself about transport at all. It knows that it can assemble 200 steamers at Baku in less than a week, if not more than that number, by drawing on the resources of the Lower Volga, and is able in consequence to withdraw for the Black Sea Fleet naval funds that otherwise would have been needed in the Asiatic quarter. I mentioned the other day that the Caucasus and Mercury Company was placing this season five new passenger steamers on its Volga-Transcaspian service. The Company now publishes its new through-booking from St. Petersburg to Samarkhand. Leaving the Russian capital on Monday, the passenger reaches (*viâ* Moscow and Griazi) the town of Tsaritzin, on the Volga, on Friday, at 8 a.m. The steamer leaves Tsaritzin at 10 a.m., and arrives at Azoun Ada on Monday, at 8 a.m. The train leaves at a quarter to four in the afternoon, and arrives at Samarkhand on Thursday, at seven in the morning; thus the entire journey from St. Petersburg to Samarkhand occupies nine days and ten-and-a-half hours. This must not be looked upon as an express service; it is simply a through ordinary service established for the first time between St. Petersburg and Samarkhand. Hitherto passengers have had to make their own arrangements for catching the steamers and trains *en route*: now they are able to travel through with all the arrangements made for them. This is an important innovation, because when through traffic is established between great centres, is gives an impulse to intercourse between them, and this increased intercourse leads to constant shortening of the time required for

transit. From the brief programme I have given of the journey, it will be seen that the traveller has to waste seven and three quarter hours at Azoun Ada. This will be reduced by six hours before long, and so by degrees the service will be improved until Russians will be able to go from St. Petersburg to Merv in six days and to Samarkhand in seven.

We may thus say that if we let Russia occupy Herat and extend her railway service thither, she will be able to deposit a train-load of St Petersburg soildiers in that city before a troopship from Portsmouth, laden with reinforcements, has got even half the way to Karachi. Those St. Petersburg troops again would be well on their way to the Helmund before the Portsmouth troops had sighted India, and they would be on the Helmund and resting there before the Portsmouth troops had reached that strategical river. It is not simply that Herat is unsafe, but Kandahar is shaky also. This is a fact that needs to be blown into the deaf ears of English statesmen—ears deaf with the everlasting Irish bawling—with the sound and energy of a steam roarer. I suppose there must be something about the training of English statesmen that causes deadening of their perceptive powers. Russian statesmen, German statesmen, and French statesmen grasp new ideas readily. They are susceptible even to a whisper. But party government in this country not only trains men to purposely place facts in false lights, in order to gain ephemeral advantages over each other and deceive the public, but it makes them callous to everything that is not within the political party-ring of the hour. Had the Conservatives been in opposition, we shonld have heard a deal of the warning conveyed by Lord Dufferin, that the present Afghan Frontier must be defended at any cost. But they are in office, and the warning falls flat upon them The Ashmead-Bartletts are too anxious to retain their sinecures to imperil it by a display of that Imperial uneasiness they manifested when hungry for office—an uneasiness which might be astutely taken advantage of by their political adversaries. Thus the improvements in the Russian advance, recorded from time to time, remain disragarded, and Lord Salisbury is allowed to be as apathetic as any Liberal statesman of parochial proclivities.

An interesting and effective article might be written upon the fate of the positive predictions of the masterly inactivity school ten years ago that India was perfectly safe from Russian attack. Sir Henry Norman, for instance, declared that the "probability of our having to struggle for Herat, or to defend India from Kandahar, is so remote that its probability is hardly worth considering." Hardly worth considering! How curious to read such prediction by the light of present circumstances, when we might hear any morning of Cossacks in the Herat Valley and English troops marching from Quetta to defend

Kandahar from an overwhelming attack delivered in a few weeks' time. The authorities were content then with the state of affairs ; they are equally content now, notwithstanding that in the interval the Russian cloud has risen above the Afghan horizon, and can be discerned by all but the short-sighted from India.

The reports from St. Petersburg and Berlin confirm what I prognosticated two months ago would be the chief result of the Shah's visit to the Russian capital. The Russian Government has informed him in pretty plain terms that it regards him in the light of a political feudatory, and he will be unwise if he fails to pay heed to the warning. The only way we can check Russia's aims in Persia is to build up a trading position in the Persian Gulf. Mere diplomatic action at Teheran is useless ; and unless, while the Shah is here, we persuade him to seek some sort of salvation, by giving us the fullest license in the Persian Gulf quarter, we might just as well save the thousands that are about to be spent in feasting the Persian monarch in London.

According to letters received from Merv at St. Petersburg, the irrigation works there are making great progress and promise to be completed this year. The celebrated Sultan Bend has been put in order, and canals are being cleared out and restored in every direction. Timber, cement, and other materials required have been imported for the most part from Russia. The Czar's domain is to be devoted entirely to the cultivation of cotton, and the irrigation works are being carried out to promote the success mainly of this species of crop, from which a great revenue is expected. The first plantation has been already laid out and sown with American cotton-seed. The Czar takes great interest in the progress of the undertaking, and receives fortnightly reports from Colonel Kosel-Poklevsky.

THE TZAR'S INTEREST IN MERV.

LONDON, *June 28th, 1889.*

ALTHOUGH the Tzar is understood to have abandoned his contemplated journey to Central Asia this year, he still takes a deep interest in what is going on in that quarter. With a view of acquainting himself with the economical condition of the country, he has selected Gospodin N. A. Vaganoff to proceed thither and report to him personally the progress observable at Askabad, Merv, Bokhara, and Tashkent. Gospodin Vaganoff is a well-known Russian political economist, who, on account of his wide knowledge of men and things, as well as his deep acquaintance with the working

of the institutions of Russia, has been repeatedly employed by the present Emperor to act as his private Commissioner in affairs of a momentous or delicate character. During the coronation festivities at Moscow he acted as Censor, and fulfilled those functions in a manner which gave the utmost satisfaction to the correspondents present. On that occasion he amplified the functions assigned him, until from being merely a revising official, he became the guide, philosopher, and friend of those who had dealings with him. He found lodgings for the correspondents, arranged money matters, secured for them the best seats to view the best sights, shielded them from the suspicion of the police, and night and day was to be always found in the press bureau or in the bed-room he had fitted up alongside it. As regards his special function—that of revising—he hardly exercised it at all. "I trust you, Mr Marvin," he said, on the first occasion I took him a telegram, "to send off nothing that will get me into a row," and he never read my telegrams afterwards. Although a Censor, he was a man of exceedingly liberal views, and if all censors acted as he did, even under trying circumstances, the office he filled would no longer excite disfavour. Sometimes a correspondent would spend the night in dissipation, and instead of calling before midnight to get his message countersigned would hammer at Vaganoff's bed-room door at two or three o'clock in the morning. On such occasions he would appear with a smiling face, and perform his functions with an unfailing good humour hardly to be expected under the circumstances. Thanks to his geniality the bureau became a club, where the correspondents assembled daily to discuss operations and seek enlightenment and counsel During the three weeks' festivities, I had many opportunities of not only discussing affairs with Vaganoff, but also of hearing him discuss them with Russian journalists and men of letters, who were keen critics in some cases, and in others possessed a fund of information which enabled them to render the conversation of real value to anyone understanding their language In general, the Russian administrator is looked upon in this country as ignorant and corrupt. Vaganoff, on the contrary, was of the ideal type that we love to see in public life and in Parliament. This case is by no means a rare one. I have met many a Russian official who would rule India as well as our best officials, and perhaps give more satisfaction. It is sheer insular cant that causes us to suppose that we English alone possess a monopoly of administrative skill suitable for the government of India. If ever we lose our hold on that country, the Vaganoffs that Russia will send thither will disillusionise both us and the world in this matter. Meanwhile, N. A. Vaganoff is to display his abilities mainly at Merv, where he is to set in order the Tzar's domain, plan the organisation of the Emperor's own cotton plantation there. and formulate measures for placing the agricultural pursuits of the Tekke Turcomans

upon a sound and healthy basis. If I mistake not his kindly, wise way, and his sympathetic interest in the progress of all with whom he comes into contact, will impress the Orientals in that region quite as much in regard to Russia's civil administrators as Colonel Alikhanoff has impressed them in respect to what Russian warriors can do.

Vaganoff is an illustration of some remarks I made a short time ago about Russia's happy method of picking out good men from the general public to infuse with rich and ruddy blood the professional civil service serum. He was never educated for the public service of Russia, and never passed any examination A landowner of wide and sagacious views in regard to the progress of the peasant, some articles he published in a review attracted the notice of the Emperor, who sent for him and attached him to the Ministry of the Interior. By degrees the special commissions he was entrusted by the Emperor to carry out secured him not only the confidence of his Sovereign but the general respect of the Russian Government. Now he is always in harness, working at something or other for the benefit of Russia ; whereas had he been in England, he would have remained unnoticed by the State, unless he had prostituted his impartiality by joining a party, told the usual number of political lies, and perpetrated the usual jobs to snatch an administrative post for himself. Talent of the aggressive, arrogant or blatent description so successful in getting into Parliament is not commonly the quality that makes a man a good administrator. Hence much of the bad government characteristic of modern England, whatever party is in power. Some day I hope some English writer, following in the footsteps of Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, will write a sound and lucid book on the history and character of the administrative institutions of Russia. When this is done, I believe it will be found that there is much that is admirable in them, and, even if not in all cases suitable for copying, they will be found to harmonize with the peculiarities of the Slav character. To me there is nothing more intolerable than the modern Radical craze to reduce every colour to black and white and plane every human development down to one dead level. The existing Parliaments of Europe constitute a sufficient nuisance without covering the whole world with similar abominations I hope that Russia may long be spared such an infliction, and will find some other way of properly ruling her Empire besides the English plan of splitting the nation into two halves, each more anxious for its own sordid party interests than for the interests of the people. In this country emancipation of the nation from the intolerable defects of Parliamentary institutions will be probably accomplished by the press, which, in spite of a back current in the shape of a more stringent libel law, is rapidly securing to itself

a preponderance of influence in the State. In Russia I look for the growth of institutions out of the present ones which will secure good government without the intervention of a paper Constitution conferring on Russia a Parliament at a stroke. It has always struck me as extremely amusing that the English people, who are incessantly preaching to the Tzar to give a Parliament to his people, are quite content to ignore that they govern India without any Parliament at all. True, our own Parliament is supposed to exercise a certain amount of supervision over Indian affairs; but it is notorious that it does not attempt to carry it out, leaving the administration of India pretty well to itself. If India can rub along without a Parliament of her own, why call the Tzar a "despot," a "tyrant," and other opprobrious names because he happens to see how restive Europe is becoming against Parliamentary Government and wisely hesitates to force on his people institutions which fail to give satisfaction elsewhere.

A number of Moscow capitalists are forming a banking corporation for the Caspian region, to be called the "Caspian Bank." The headquarters will be at Moscow, and branches will be established at Baku, Batoum, Tashkent, Samarkhand, Bokhara, and Teheran. The Russian Government is encouraging the scheme, which will remove one of the principal impediments to the growth of trade in the centres concerned. At Baku and Batoum in particular banks have long been needed, and much inconvenience wll be prevented by the establishment of the one proposed.

I hear that several Russian staff officers have been selected to survey Khorassan in the autumn, and should not be surprised if one of them puts in an appearance in the Seistan district. A sharp look out should be kept for prowling Russians in that quarter.

WAR-TIME IN PEACE.

LONDON, *July 11th, 1889.*

THE departure of the Tzar for a holiday trip in Finland may be accepted as a sign that despite the political restlessness in Servia, there will be no serious disturbance in Europe for a little while to come. By a sort of general agreement, the potentates of Europe have arranged not to fight this year, if they can possibly avoid it, and, while this tacit truce prevails, we may look with a certain amount of indifference upon the "rumours of war" that keep coming from the Balkan peninsula. As for next year, that is buried deep in funereal clouds. Politicians are wondering what will occur.

when the Exhibition is over, and France begins afresh to think of business. If France goes "on the rampage," Russia will assuredly follow suit in the East, and we may witness anew a recurrence of those sharp exciting war-scares of the last five years which are so disagreeable a feature of modern European politics. These war-scares of the future will be more dangerous than the previous ones, because every one of the last found some power or other unprepared for immediate hostilities; whereas the next will be ushered in with the troops of every country massed on the frontier, and ready for a Waterloo within a week of the declaration of war. I think I pointed out some time ago that the present condition of affairs on the Continent possesses all the features of a war, save the actual shedding of blood. Every movement of troops on one side of the frontier is followed by a corresponding movement on the other, and provokes in turn fresh offensive and defensive developments as harassing as in the old wars, when Generals manœuvred for months against each other without coming to blows. Such operations in those times were only carried out after a declaration of war: now they are carried on during the prevalence of what is called peace. In like manner new fortifications in one country beget new defences in another; one strategical railway is immediately opposed by a second; fresh weapons are suddenly and secretly adopted, at an enormous outlay, to snatch a brief advantage over an adversary who is found to be unexpectedly prompt in retorting; the press is used to depress an opponent by attacks on his financial credit; and in a variety of ways, and with a vast expenditure, the great powers of Europe show how mistrustful they are of one another, and how conscious they all are that the next war will be a war to the knife, accompanied with that "meat blanching" process of the weakest to which Prince Bismarck grimly referred on a famous occasion. The "silver streak" saves us much of the anxiety inseparable from such a state of military restlessness, and enables us to look with a certain amount of calmness upon it; but for Germany, menaced on each side by an implacable foe, the position is dreadfully unpleasant, and involves an amount of sharpness, promptness, and swiftness of decision which reacts favourably upon the diplomacy of the country.

From the Russian standpoint, things are going on very favourably in the Balkan peninsula. Servia is looked upon as pretty well won over; and it is hoped that Bulgaria will become more accommodating as the differences between Prince Ferdinand and the clergy develop. Against Turkey there is no hostile aim for the moment: the eyes of the Cossacks are directed not upon Constantinople but Vienna. Russian statesmen at last clearly understand that, so long as Austria remains intact, they

have to contend with Germany and Austria in the Balkan peninsula as well as the forces of the Sultan. Therefore Vienna must be conquered in advance of Constantinople. This is a policy entirely satisfactory for England. Were Turkey menaced by worrying intrigues and the massing of troops, our statesmen would have their hands full in looking after the safety of Armenia and the Bosphorus. In that case the Austrians could sleep in peace As it is, Austria and Germany have to keep on the alert, and England entertains no immediate concern for the safety of Turkey. Such a state of things is surely to our interest to see maintained, yet certain short-sighted faddists would have us rush into a paper alliance with Austria against Russia, and in consequence bring down upon us the aggressiveness of Russia in the Armenian or Afghan quarter. We are not vitally interested in the safeguarding of Vienna or Constantinople. We are vitally interested in keeping the Russians out of Herat and Persia, until we have rendered India impregnable to a Russian attack. Anything that staves off a further Russian advance in Afghanistan and Persia should be encouraged, and not replaced by a policy needessly withdrawing Russia's offensive action from the Balkan peninsula towards India.

The *Moscow Gazette* ridicules Sir Lepel Griffin's project for establishing what it calls a "Cossackdom in Kashmir." The best way for England to safeguard India, it says is for England to be on her good behaviour towards Russia. If India were lost, England would be reduced to the condition of a second Belgium and Switzerland. Russia could easily turn her out of India if she chose to do so. Sentiments of this character are by no means new. They are held by the majority of military men in Russia. They cannot but grow in strength as Russia waxes more vigorous in the Caspian Sea and Persia. I have repeatedly insisted that England does not attach adequate weight to Russia's material development in that quarter. A correspondent. writing from Baku, states that trade between the Persian ports and the Volga is increasing so rapidly that nearly twenty Russian steamers are now on the constant service existing between Astrakhan and the South Caspian ports The Persian littoral of the Caspian Sea is rapidly falling under the dominance of Russian traders, consuls, and agents; and as the Persians on the spot are unable to oppose any resistance to this commercial and political pressure, no other future seems open to the country than to fall completely under Russian sway.

Another correspondent at Baku, referring to the petroleum trade, observes that "this season has been remarkable for the number of large tank steamers added to the Baku oil fleet. Upwards of twenty new steamers have been added since the opening of the navigation season. A special one is the Votka Works, a tank

steamer of over 1,300 tons cargo capacity, intended exclusively for the conveyance of liquid fuel. It belongs to a Baku syndicate, composed of Toomaeff Dadasheff and others." I have repeatedly remarked that the growth of the Caspian marine, thanks to the development of the oil trade, is really more worthy of the attention of English statesmen than any passing political intrigue on the part of Russia in Persia or Afghanistan. Twenty new oil steamers on the Caspian means an addition to the transport-power of Russia in that quarter of the greatest value to the military authorities, while involving no cost to the State.

A report just issued by the Russian Government states that last year over 600,000,000 gallons of crude petroleum were extracted from the earth at Baku. The exports of oil from Russia comprised kerosine, 123 million gallons, lubricating oil, 11 million gallons, and distillate, &c., 16 million gallons, making a total of 150 million gallons. The Minister of Finance refers with a certain amount of pride to the rapid increase of the trade, and its favourable influence on Russia revenue; and no wonder, for it was the £600,000 he derived in 1888 from the kerosine tax that enabled him to announce to Russia the gratifying circumstance of having a real surplus for the first time for many years.

When the *Times*' correspondent last year, from personal pique, "slated" the Transcaspian railway, I pointed out that it would speedily justify its existence by promoting intercourse between Central Asia and Europe, and establishing intimate trade relations between the newly acquired region and Russia Proper. This view has been justified by events. The Tiflis *Kavkaz* states that almost every steamer arriving at Azoun Ada lands one or more foreigners bound by the Transcaspian railwy for Samarkhand. Many English are visiting Central Asia, and many French. With respect to trade, some of the items of news are very interesting. For instance, between January and June the railway transported nearly 50,000 sheep from Central Asia to the Caspian. Most of these were bound for the provinces of Baku and Daghestan, where last year's severe winter destroyed many sheep and led to large purchases being made in the Turcoman region to replace them. Then the line carried during the same period 10,000 tons of Central Asia corn, much of it intended for Transcaucasia, where there has been a scarcity A large quantity of raw silk was also exported from Central Asia, a deal of it for France. Among manufactured goods figured cotton materials specially prepared at Samarkhand to the order of a Russian merchant at Yalta, in the Crimea, who finds that the Samarkhand patterns enjoy a better sale in South Russia and Turkey than the designs current in the Turkish trade. The Yalta merchant is probably only one among many Russians who are

quickly building up commercial intercourse between East and West; while England continues to regard Central Asia as sunk in the sands of irremovable lethargy.

From Askabad the news comes that the Persians are really at last making the waggon road between the Russian frontier and Meshed. At least a contractor has appeared on the scene with a few hundred men, and something is being done—probably sufficient to supply a rejoinder to Russia, should she renew her diplomatic pressure of last winter, although it is doubtful whether the Persian authorities are in the least anxious to facilitate intercourse between the Russians and the capital of Khorassan. A large quantity of Russian sugar is being sent from Askabad to Meshed. At Merv a plantantion is being established from which trees, shrubs, and seeds will for the future be distributed throughout Central Asia. From the Afghan frontier the Russian press publishes no information whatever.

The hero of the recent conflict between Russia and France, Ashinoff, has now finally disappeared from the scene of politics. A short time ago he arrived at Saratoff under a gendarme escort, and is now awaiting there the notification of the Imperial authorities as to where he is to settle down in exile in Siberia. The affair in which he figured so prominently was one of those dubious undertakings of a speculative character of which the Russian Government is unduly fond. A needy adventurer who had wandered from Saratoff to Constantinople, Ashinoff conceived the idea of re-establishing religious relations between the churches of Russia and Abyssinia which have much in common. The Russian press at first did not think highly of the scheme; but it was taken up with zeal by Katkoff, in the *Moscow Gazette*, and Ashinoff returned from a trip to the Red Sea with an Abyssinian deputation and glowing accounts of the readiness of the natives to promote the establishment of a Russian religious settlement. Then the *Novœ Vremya* and other enthusiastic Panslavist papers painted in glowing terms the achievements in the past of "Free Cossacks" of the Ashinoff type, and predicted that another Siberia would be won by this modern Yermak Timofœff. So funds flowed in, the church took up the matter zealously, a couple of hundred people enrolled themselves under Ashinoff, and the expedition set out for the Red Sea. Had Russia been dealing with England, Ashinoff would have made good his footing, just as the audacious German traders were allowed by our poltroon statesmen to make good their footing at Zanzibar, and turn out of East Africa 10,000 Indian subjects, whose ruin is a disgrace to the present Conservative administration. Fortunately Russia had to deal with the French, and the French were represented by a different sort of man from the jelly-fish Yate or Lumsden type, unable to do anything unless in touch with resolute, courageous

superiors. Before the audacious settlement of the Cossacks on territory protected by France could take root by the aid of procrastinating diplomacy, the French naval commander turned his guns on to the colony and blew Ashinoff into an immediate surrender. It then fell to Russia to yield to accomplished facts, which she did with a far better grace than we displayed after Penjdeh. Ashinoff and his Cossacks were promptly disavowed and ordered into police quarantine at Sebastopol, from which they are now being sent by "administrative process" to Siberia. Had events gone the other way, and Ashinoff been able to hold out long enough against the diplomatic requests of France to depart, the Russian Government would have formally recognised his existence as representing Russia, and a coaling station might have been won on the shores of the Rea Sea in unpleasant proximity to Aden. The Russian Government did not altogether relish the rebuff; but co-operation with France is too good a card to play against Germany to be thrown aside over such a gambling incident as the Ashinoff fiasco.

ST. STEPHEN'S OR SIBERIA FOR THE BABU.

LONDON, *August 16th, 1889.*

OF late several educated natives of India have forwarded me the published productions of their pens. Some of these are loyal; others of a decidedly traitorous tendency. Not being your Indian reviewer, I cannot gratify the probable desire of the senders of those books and pamphlets and favour them with a critical notice of their works. But, with your permission, I will avail myself of the opportunity to say a few words about the aspirations of Young India. As a writer myself, I naturally sympathise with the idea that India should be governed by the Pen, rather than by the Sword. For this reason I have always watched the progress of what a Russian would call the "Intelligence" of India—*i. e.*, the development of the thoughtful classes—with intense interest. Having lived among the revolutionary students of Russia, and sympathised with them in their conflict with the superstitions of Government and religion there, I can perhaps put myself in thought more readily alongside the students of India than the average officer or official. It is impossible for me to close my eyes to the extravagance of ideas, the exuberance of fancy, and the wildness of aspiration of many of the leaders of Educated India;

but I am able at least to make an allowance—a charitable allowance—for much that excites horror in the minds of men who live the life of well-regulated machines lubricated by the hard cash of India, and cannot realise that different circumstances from their own must produce different results. The point of view of the Indian official, whether on active service or retired, cannot but be quite opposed to that of the non-official native. The one has his career manufactured for him: the other must manufacture his own career. "What shall I be—what shall I do?" These are questions that the educated native has to think out for himself, unaided by well-to-do mammas and papas, by Messrs. Wren and Gurney, and by the well-greased machinery of the Indian Government, which, gripping the raw lad on his arrival from home, passes him on with little exertion on his own part through the various stages of administrative development until, in process of time, it propels him back to London a pensioned old buffer, the bore of everybody and the horror of his club. To such a being the thought probably never crosses his mind—"What is my place in the Empire?" His place is found for him. Circumstances not of his own seeking or making place him at the bottom of the ladder, and he simply has to spend a well-regulated life climbing to the top. The future of England troubles him little, because the Empire is in the hands of his own countrymen, and he is quite content to leave its guidance to their strong hands and stout hearts. As for the future of India, he is for the most part quite content that things should fashion. One point, at any rate, he has resolutely made up his mind upon—India ought to continue to be ruled for an indefinite period by the manufactured products of Messrs. Wren and Gurney. The ardent aspirations of certain educated natives of India that India should rule herself, he can hardly be expected to sympathise with. Hence he sometimes talks of repression, and even of suppression. However, public opinion in England looks with a kindly eye on Indian progress, and, in the words of a reformer, "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb of Asia."

What is my place in the Empire? How can a native of India put that question to himself without feeling a certain amount of discontent. India is governed, but she is not represented. Her sons have not that consolation of conquest that the natives of Asia, subjugated by Russia, have; for whereas the moment a Russian Asiatic is conquered a career lies open to him up to the very steps of the White Tzar's throne, the career of a native Indian is blocked not only in England but in India, by a variety of obstacles, even though he may be native of a province that has been under English control before the time of Peter the Great. Only a few years ago an Armenian was Prime Minister of Russia. Has India

ever had the counterpart of Loris Melikoff? We claim to be better rulers than the Russians; but how many of India's sons occupy seats in our so-called "Imperial Parliament." When the budget of India comes on at the fag end of the session, before a thin and jaded House, how many of the real representatives of India take part in the discussion of Indian policy? These are questions that cannot but occur to the educated Indian, and all who sympathise with the real and vital progress of the Empire at large must feel a sincere regret that a satisfactory answer cannot be returned to them. Posing as we do as the best governed nation in the world, India has a fair claim for demanding a removal of many of the anomalies which prevent her from taking her proper place in the Empire, and securing an adequate representation of her interests.

I suppose it is because educated natives of India get so little sympathy from the average retired Indian official—in himself a not very sympathetic creature—that the bulk of them "catch on" to the tail of the Radical party. This is a pity, because it excites a prejudice against Indian progress—a prejudice so grounded during the unfortunate tenure of Lord Ripon in India that a large section of the English public regards educated India and discontented India as synonymous terms. If Lord Ripon took the real and heartfelt interest in India he pretended when Viceroy, he has displayed very little of it since he returned to his own country. What has he done for India the last four years? He has a seat in the House of Lords; he enjoys political influence; but although his old admirers still sometimes term him the Friend of India, the cleverest political auctioneer would have a hard job to make out a catalogue of his efforts on behalf of Indian progress since he exchanged Viceregal Simla for the metropolis of the Empire. What is true of Ripon is for the most part true of other Liberal and Radical sympathisers of India. It is not simply that nothing comes of their speechifying about India; I charge them with not talking enough. India is simply a secondary interest to them. They make use of her for political ends only so far as it suits their purpose. Speaking generally, the Radical party in England does so little for India, and does even that little so badly, that the intelligent classes of India positively lose by the alliance which their leaders have struck up with it, in the hope of realising the aspirations of Rising India. This alliance, to my view, has done India a deal of harm. I am quite willing to admit that the Conservatives have not done much to attract Young India; but to fly from the polar regions of English Conservatism to the sandy shoals of Radicalism has not been a wise policy. How little it is approved of in England is shown by the ill-luck that has attended the efforts of natives of India to get into the House. With the aspiration to be properly represented in the

Assembly of the Empire I fully sympathise; but I do not believe that any great success will attend the efforts to woo English constituencies. English voters like to be represented by Englishmen. It is a natural feeling, and it is a waste of force to run against it. A few years ago there was a proposal to run a native of India as a Radical candidate for Plumstead. I was dead against the proposal, and had the attempt been made I should have certainly voted against him, no matter how good a man he was or how great a scamp his opponent. I would never consent, out of mere sentimentalism, to be represented in Parliament by any other than an Englishman. But while I hold that an English Parliament should be filled by Englishmen, I am strongly of opinion that the people of India ought to claim a representation, and a representation on a large scale in an Imperial Parliament. Here is a proper path for persistent agitation, and one which I am prepared to support to the fullest extent of my influence. Every educated Indian ought to be an ardent advocate of Imperial Federation, because it is only through some such scheme that India can enjoy that share in the representation of the Empire to which she is entitled by virtue of her population, her vast commercial interests, her political position in Asia, and the loyalty she has displayed the last thirty years.

I am all the more dissatisfied with the present attempts to enter Parliament by wooing English voters in a Radical garb, because they savour too much of entering Parliament by the back door. India is entitled to greater consideration than this, and it would be better if her sons stood more on their dignity and agitated for a full representation in an Assembly of the whole Empire than the beggarly representation by means of one or two natives in an English local Parliament (for that is what our present Parliament really is) containing ten times as many Indian ex-officials to outweigh their influence. If the present Conservative Government, in the persons of Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour, is not particularly well disposed towards Imperial Federation, there is no gainsaying the fact that a very large proportion of the general public of England look upon the idea with considerable favour, while in the colonies the movement in support of it becomes more powerful every year. A powerful agitation in India would exercise a healthy influence in turn on the mother country and the colonies, and would tend to hasten the time when all three will be properly represented in a real Imperial Parliament at Westminster, and not by the present effete parochial institution which considers it does full justice to the Empire at large when it gives 90 per cent. of its time to the miserable little island of Ireland, and assigns the other 10 to India and the colonies only when the House is nearly empty. An agitation to remedy this unwholesome state of affairs would

appeal not simply to the Radical tail of the English people, but to the general public of the whole Empire.

I have said that Russia in annexing Asiatics throws open to them a career that extends to the very foot of the throne; while England has deliberately closed many avenues of advancement to the people of India. At the same time, it should be clearly borne in mind that Russia favours the Sword more than the Pen, and that under her rule most of the native reformers of India who aspire for St. Stephen's would probably find their way to Siberia. Those who have doubts on this point should read George Kennan's masterly articles on Russian political criminals and exiles in the *Century* magazine. These have been running through several volumes of that admirable American publication, and give a better account of the opposition movement against Autocracy in Russia than any work extant. I trust that in process of time the energetic publisher in this country, Mr. T. Fisher Unwin, will see his way to re-issue the articles in a volume form, when a large sale may safely be predicted for a work which in many respects transcends Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace's well-known book on Russia. Mr. Kennan's investigations bear out what I have always held to be the case, that in Russia there is no room for the non-governmental reformer. One must either wear a uniform and try and effect reform in an official capacity, or, under pain of imprisonment or exile, one must regard in silence the evils that afflict the country. This is not simply the case with Russia proper, but it is true of every part of the Empire, as many an Armenian babu in the Caucasus has found to his cost. Mere tourist scampering across Russia from one end to the other, and toadying to high officials after the manner of the Rev. H. Lansdell, may not feel the stress of despotic rule; but the moment one dives below official life into literary, journalistic and scholastic spheres, one rapidly becomes aware of the evils and abuses described with such clearness, accuracy and truthfulness by Mr. George Kennan.

Now that the Government of India has promised a premium to those officials who master the Russian language, we may hope that some of them may in time study the administrative methods in vogue in Russia, and endeavour to introduce whatever features are good into India. I have more than once pointed out that there is a good side to Russian governmental methods as well as an evil; and if the adoption of any of them would improve the administrative machinery of India it would be well to adopt them. It is noteworthy that the Transcaspian Railway, which is now being extended from Samarkhand to Tashkent, is to be pushed on afterwards to Siberia, so that should India fall under Russian rule immediately after the junction of the Russian and Indian railway system—now simply a matter of a few years—complete railway communication will exist

for discontented Indian reformers between the principal goals of India and the principal exile depôts in the frozen wastes of Siberia. The mines of Kara would then be found less pleasant than the lobbies of St. Stephen's, and the educated native of India who can now print and publish what he likes, however disloyal or scurrilous, would have to get, under pain of exile, police sanction for every item passed through the printing press, whether a political article or a sonnet, or such innocent tradesmen's placards as "Poultry is cheap to-day," and "Rags and Bones bought here." Educated India has its grievances, but it can at least think, speak, write and print pretty well what it likes; whereas, in Russia, a death's head grins into every author's ink-pot.

ENGLISH BUMBLEDOM AND THE INDIAN BUDGET.

LONDON, *August 30th, 1889.*

THE 260 million people of India cannot but be delighted once more with that marvellous manifestation of Providence by virtue of which the revision of British rule for the past year was accomplished at the fag end of the Parliamentary session by a House consisting at no period of the three hours' debate of more than 20 members, of whom half were officials, and fifteen officials and ex-officials, the remaining five alone representing the independent and unofficial judgment of the country. To give the fragment of a weary evening to taking stock of the progress of an Empire containing fifty times the population of Ireland may seem a sound and satisfactory policy to a so-called Imperial Parliament, which has spent the last six months in incessant jaw about Ireland and nothing else; but outsiders on the Continent and elsewhere must be excused for thinking, as they sometimes do, that a country which sets so little store by an Empire entrusted to its care by a miraculous succession of happy events does not deserve to keep it. Once, more, for one-does-not-know-how-many-times, the whole press on the morrow of the Budget, has denounced the Government and the House of Commons for insulting India by keeping over the Budget until the closing hours of the session. Everybody condemns the practice, but the farce will be repeated next session, and the session after, and innumerable sessions after that, unless a determined and continued outcry be organized by India. Canting politicians, and there are few politicians in this country who do not cant, often dilate on the blessedness of India being under a Parliament of free

people; but the question may be pertinently put, that if only five non-official members of that Parliament devote the fraction of the 365th fraction of a year to revising British rule in India, wherein lies the superiority of that rule (in respect to Parliamentary revision) over the long and animated debates that would take place in the Russian Committee of Ministers, if Russia were mistress of India? Parliamentary supervision of India, as at present exercised, is really nothing more than a screaming farce, and the solemn owls of the Treasury and opposite benches who play the farce, must be totally devoid of humour, or they would rise on their legs every session, and rush off roaring with laughter, as being a farce too funny to be played before the 260 millions of India any longer.

Between the two parties of the House of Commons there is not a pin to choose as to the guilt of burking the Indian Budget. The Radicals are just as much to blame as the Conservatives, and the reformers of India make a huge mistake in toadying to the former to get an alteration, instead of addressing the whole British public. Plenty of energy and plenty of money could be forthcoming on behalf of such a relatively insignificant measure as the Ilbert Bill, but when it comes to conducting an efficient crusade in this country to compel Parliament to discuss the Indian Budget early in the session I see India herself doing nothing. And unless India moves England will not move. Probably among native public men in India there is a deal of discouragement at the way they have been so often dished by professional politicians. Radical members rush out to India, excite a fermentation in order to get whisked about on the froth at the expense of ardent admirers, then, having had a holiday on the cheap, and said sufficient about India to strengthen their position with their constituents, they do as little for India as they possibly can. Men of this stamp, as a rule, are more indolent reformers when they enter office than the most stick-in-the-mud Tory. Of a different type, but equally unreliable, are Radicals like Sir Charles Dilke. Before he attained Ministerial power he was an ardent Imperialist as regards the development of the colonies, and was strongly opposed to the Russian advance. The moment he secured power he adopted a tone of Jack-in-Office brusqueness to all who ventured to question him as to how things were going, and proved so weak and incompetent that he consented to the evacuation of Kandahar and the tearing up of the Pishin Railway, he cheated the public into a false sense of security by pretending the Russians had bound themselves to evacuate Askabad, when they had absolutely refused to do any such thing, and he allowed them to occupy Merv, and prepare for the raid on Penjdeh without insisting on a single solitary measure to prevent them. So ignorant did he allow himself to remain as

to what the Russians were doing in Central Asia, that even after quitting office he still imagined (as shown in the first of the *Fortnightly Review* articles) the Transcaspian railroad to be a mere ephemeral tramway. If ever a life be published of Dilke his biographer will be unable to lay his finger on a single movement in Indian, colonial, and foreign affairs and say, "here the author of *Greater Britain* did good." In point of fact Sir Charles Dilke's official career may be summed up in two items, the Redistribution Bill and Fanny. I would readily forgive his sins of commission on the principle that in this selfish world good men make the worst rulers; but I can never forgive him his sins of omission in regard to the Empire while he was at the Foreign Office. To rehabiltiate himself Sir Charles has recently rushed to India, and on his return rushed afresh into print with the discovery that India is in the deepest peril from the Russians being in possession of certain menacing points, which he himself was instrumental in allowing them to obtain. On the agitation he has started he no doubt hopes to ride back into office; but up to now the results have not been encouraging. Even his warmest friends have deserted him, in consequence of his having ceased to cleanse his character. "To think," said a wellknown politician and intimate friend of Dilke's the other day, "I should have honestly devoted day after day to serious study of foreign and Indian affairs, believing Dilke was doing his best to keep back the Russian advance, and he all the while amusing himself with women." It is Dilke's misfortune that he has offended not only the good but the wicked. Had he displayed Bismarckian capacity while in office, instead of contenting himself with being the double of that inane and weak little muff, Earl Granville, he would have had around him to-day a ring of powerful sympathisers in spite of all the revelations of the divorce court.

No, Sir Charles Dilke's name must be crossed off. He has had his innings and proved a waster. Life is too short to allow too much time to be given up to men who fail. Other and better men must be allowed to occupy the platform. Cannot India look out for more powerful and popular representatives than Dilke and Bradlaugh. Of Brádlaugh this can at least be said that he has certainly proved an excellent member of Parliament. I do not admire him as a public man, and I detest many of his views, yet (speaking as a Church of England man) I am bound to confess that since he entered the House he has done more good work than the whole bench of bishops put together. All the same the admission must be made that he is not a man having the ear of the nation. No matter how softly or sweetly he may attune his appeal there are whole sections of the nation, and the most powerful sections of the nation, too, who will never listen to his singing.

Political faddists of the Caine type are even less influential notwithstanding the noise they make. They are like blue bottles in a quart pot—they make so much noise that one would imagine an ocean to be seething inside the vessel, but when you look in all that is seen is a fussy hatcher of putrefaction knocking itself against the sides, damaging itself more than the sturdy pot impervious to its banging. Nor yet again does India require to be represented solely by men like Fawcett—men who deal exclusively with the economical aspect of Indian life, neglecting the wider political issues altogether. What India wants are men who are not simply Englishmen, or simply Indians; but whose hearts beat for the whole Empire. Such men cannot be content at the secondary and subjugated rôle played by India at the present moment. They must feel, if they know the Empire well, and love it with an intensity of patriotism still possible in this world of ours in spite of the sordid life led by most Englishmen, that India ought to stand side by side in equal rank with Canada and Australia. It is impossible for such men not to regard with scorn the paltry commercial vision which sees in India only a market for calicoes and hard ware. They cannot but be disgusted at those who look upon India as a mere spawning ground of careers for young men with machine-made minds of the most approved Wren and Gurney pattern. They earnestly sympathise with the efforts of India to secure the place which is hers by right in the composition of the Empire. They recognize that the sun of India warms and invigorates a commerce which otherwise would die away on this damp and uncongenial island. Such men, when confronted with the cant phrase about the "Blessing of British rule in India," demand with indignant mien—"And what about the Blessing of Indian trade in England?" The gain is not all one-sided. If England has rendered India orderly and safe India has rendered England prosperous. To put in plain language the warnings of political economists and statesmen millions would have to clear out of the country like starved rats if England were to lose India. If that be so, India has a right, as a purveyor of prosperity to the English people, to demand that she shall not be stultified and insulted before all the world by having only three paltry hours at the fag end of a faded session assigned for the consideration of a whole year's rule of the officials who govern her 260 millions.

The home press had hardly commenced to discuss Dr. Noetling's report "strongly" deprecating my "wild ideas about beating or competing with American or Russian oil as being only too likely to prove utterly illusory," when the mail brings the *Pioneer* in which the Doctor completely substantiates the soundness and sanity of my statements, Dr. Noetling observes in his letter:—"Matters are much better than they looked when my report was

written. The oil-bearing strata have since been traced over a large area, only a small part of which has hitherto been explored, and that in a most unscientific way. I, in my report, calculated that under a reasonable system of working one square mile could produce not less than 1,440,000 litres per diem. This estimate may be a little too high, and I rather doubt whether the oil-bearing strata could stand the strain for any length of time, but admitting, say, only half of the estimated production, 500,000 litres per diem per square mile, the production would be something enormous, as the oil-bearing strata are now known to extend, roughly speaking, over an area of not less than 100 square miles, a fact which was not known to me when I wrote my report on the oil fields of Twingoung and Beno."

Here then Dr. Noetling declares the potential petroleum supply of Burma to be "something enormous." If that be so, why should not Burma compete with or beat America and Russia? Dr. Noetling has no reply to this except the astonishingly lame one that what he meant about "wild ideas" was that Burma in her present condition could not hope to beat or compete with Russia and America. Of course not. No living man in this world, nor yet any dead man whose bones are numbered with the Doctor's fossils, ever thought or said she could. What I have said, and I believe my speech is so plain that all men can comprehend it, is that Burma possesses sufficient deposits of oil to enable her, when those deposits are properly tapped by thousands of drill-wells, to hold her own against America and Russia in the markets of Asia. Who but a pedantic German palæontologist that had spent so much time among old fossils as to have acquired their characteristics himself, could have dreamed of comparing the infantile industry of Burma, as yet undeveloped, with the mature growth of 30 years duration in America, and then reporting that Burma cannot possibly hope to compete with that country. Of course it cannot *now*, but that is no reason why it should not in ten years time. Had not the Doctor been such an utter ignoramus in oil matters he would have known that the time from which Baku started from the present native pit condition of Burma to the time she became a fully fledged Europeanized industrial power, competing with America everywhere on the continent, was less than ten years. If this was accomplished by a handful of Swedes in barbarous Russia, in spite of immense transport difficulties such as have no existence in Burma, why should not the skill and capital of England render Burma a similar competitor of America within the same period. That is my view, and now that Dr. Noetling admits that I was right in my assumption that the supply of oil in Burma is enormous, I have good cause for complaint that the Indian authorities should have allowed a report to go forth with

such an absurd and untrue pessimist statement in it as that about "wild ideas," &c. In England plenty of people will read the report who will not see the Doctor's explanation in the *Pioneer*. If after writing his report Dr. Noetling obtained information which caused him to modify his view and agree with me that the supply is really "enormous," why did he not get this alteration inserted at the last moment as a leaflet in the report? He had an interval of some months apparently to do this. As it is, he and those who have been instrumental in issuing the report, have inflicted a most unwarrantable damper on the Burma oil industry, for which they ought to be severely censured by the Indian Government.

THE PRESS IN RUSSIA, ENGLAND, AND INDIA.

LONDON, *September 6th, 1889.*

BETWEEN officialdom and the press there is a natural antipathy. The appointment of a man to any office, from the Premiership of England to the Inspectorship of Nuisances, is always accepted by the recipient as implying that nature has fully endowed him with the qualities necessary for the discharge of his functions. Until a man is an official, whether it be Cabinet Minister, company director, departmental chief, vestry man, or secretary of the society of amalgamated chimney-sweeps and scavengers, he is commonly on the side of the press. He feels that he is a nobody; his isolation as merely one of the public distresses him; he craves for notice from other men, and is delighted beyond measure when he sees his name printed for the first time. During this period of his existence he is proud of the press: he extols it as a safeguard of public liberty, he insists that it ought to know everything, criticise everybody, and make everybody feel that great though he may be by virtue of power, wealth or birth, he is, after all, the servant of the public, which public is worthily represented by the Fourth Estate, the press. If the press does not find out everything, from the latest secret treaty to the latest device for adulterating the cat's milk supplied to the local work house, he vigorously urges it to be more energetic, and the more the Government and the contractors for cats' milk fume and rage at the disclosure of their secrets, the more he cheers the editors onwards in the path of newspaper enterprise. Suddenly, however, a revolution takes place. Providence provides him with an appointment. He becomes an official; and whether that appointment be so high as that of Cabinet Minister or so low as that of unpaid taster of cats' milk at the local work house, he immediately changes his

deportment towards the press. He adopts a mysterious and dignified air. He denies the right of the press to pry into the secrets of his deportment, or to publish anything about it except of a highly laudatory character. If anything of a highly laudatory character *is* published, he does not gratefully thank the editor, but accepts it without any personal acknowledgment as being nothing more that is due to him on the part of the press. If he sends any news about his deportment to the press, he expects it to be published entire, and the editor to be very grateful for paying nothing for what is mostly advertisement matter. These relations continue, until something is published criticising him; then he assumes an air of outraged authority, and declares that the press ought to be muzzled. It becomes a grievance with him that the press has far too much license. He studies the law of libel. To sympathetic friends he bewails the good old times when editors were horse-whipped and made to stand in a pillory with their nostrils slit open. He insists that all men holding office, whether as Prime Minister or as public taster of cats' milk at the workhouse, ought to be protected against the libellous and licentious criticism of irresponsible frivolity. The attitude continues the whole time he is a Jack in office. At length he drops out of it or is kicked from his position, and becomes an isolated and unticketted item of humanity again. Then by degrees he believes once more in the press and is grateful for any crumb of recognition that throws a gleam upon his obscurity or enables him to wage controversial warfare with those who have replaced him in office.

Human nature is pretty nearly the same all the world over, and if sufficient power were given to our Gladstones and Salisburys, we should see in this country a similar spectacle to that which occurred at St. Petersburg a few days ago when the rag-tag and bob-tail of Russian journalism followed Kraevsky to the grave. Autocratic Government and a free press cannot exist side by side in the same country. It is natural for any man who cannot beat his adversary in print—above all if the enemy is publishing secrets—to wish to silence him by suppressing the newspaper; and if he possesses sufficient power to do so, he simply shuts him up at a stroke. Then, if both editor and enemy protest and "show fight," and he happens to possess sufficient power, he disposes of their resistance once for all by packing them both off to prison or exile. All this is very natural, and I frankly declare that if I were a Russian Minister I should unhesitatingly close all controversies in this simple and summary fashion. Controversies always are a nuisance. You never convince your opponent, and it is always a matter of doubt whether you have succeeded in convincing the public. There is never any doubt about the result when

you suppress a newspaper and pack off a critic to Siberia. All argument is ended at a stroke—you are left in peace; you have the pleasure of feeling that your enemy has had the worst of it; and if there is any murmuring at all, you have the satisfaction of knowing that the public fully appreciate and recognise your power, which is always a source of pleasure even to a public taster of cats' milk supervising but a single purveyor.

When therefore any English official or politician shakes his head and bemoans the existence of grinding tyranny in Russia, as witness a gagged press, I always tap him on the shoulder and exclaim: "My dear sir, if you were a Russian *tchinovnik* you would keep down the press in a precisely similar fashion. Only it so happens that in this country the press happens to be powerful enough to keep English *tchinovniks* in their proper place." No man fought harder than Kraevsky to establish the freedom of the press in Russia. His newspaper, the *Golos*, was suppressed times without number. Started when liberal ideas (kindly see that the printer spells liberal with a little "l," as our Liberals have ever been most illiberal in their views), were fashionable in Russia the *Golos* rapidly became the leading St. Petersburg newspaper, as much by virtue of its excellent supply of news as by the publication of admirable articles. The paper was well printed, well edited, well subscribed to, and was, in a word, a paper of which any country might be proud. By playing off one Minister against the other, Kraevsky always had somebody or other to help him out of a scrape, and for fifteen years enjoyed remarkable success. When the conflict with Nihilism commenced, however, the authorities became more rigorous and Kraevsky more restive, and at length the conflict culminated in a sharp passage of arms, resulting in the final suppression of the newspaper. An attempt was made by reprinting it in the same style, but with a different editor, to evade the edict. The Government, however, was determined to have done with Kraevsky in any form, and suppressed the new sheet also. After this, Kraevsky abandoned journalism, a soured and ruined man, and devoted himself to education. Becoming a member of the St. Petersburg School Board, he infused such energy into that body that, whereas when he joined it, there were only 16 schools, there are now 250 at the Russian capital. By his will he has bequeathed considerable sums to the universities and scientific societies; while his valuable collection of manuscripts are given to the Imperial Public Library. So terrorized, however, is the press that in describing his career, no attempt has been made to discuss his many years' activity as an editor. It would be dangerous to do so; for if there is anything more calculated to depress an educated Russia, it is the miserable newspapers that have taken the place of

the *Golos* and represent to-day the press of Russia It is enough to make a man a revolutionary to look at these miserable rags. The two principal newspapers at St. Petersburg—the *Novoe Vremya* and *Novosti*—manage to live at all, because they never criticise the Government, publish no news in which any official is concerned, and serve up intelligence in the form of a dry calendar of events. The *Moscow Gazette*, is no better. Add the *Odessa Vestnik* and the *Tiflis Vestnik*, and one has exhausted the list of Russian newspapers worth opening at all. Provincial sheets such as the *Saratoff Vestnik* are mere official gazettes with a few foreign telegrams thrown in. In all Siberia, there is no newspaper beyond these official rags ; there is only one official rag in all Turkistan ; there is none at all in the new Transcaspian province, nor yet again in the province of Kars, although,10 years have elapsed since it was wrested from barbarous Turkish rule. If the contents of all the newspapers in the Russian Empire were boiled down, there would be less news in the result at the end of the week than one would find in Lloyd's, while the brain matter in all the articles would, if condensed, be found inferior to a single article in a third rate English provincial newspaper, written by some reporter just commencing his career. To one accustomed to the English press the inanity and imbecility of the Russian press is positively appalling. Autocracy has been splendidly successful in its conflict with the press. "Order reigns at Warsaw ;" but to the non-official Englishmen it would seem far better to be Queen-Empress of the Jungle of the Native press of India, however wild the growth, than Czar over such a journalistic Desert of Sahara.

It is because I have wandered among the ruins of the Russian press that I am dead foe to any attempt to clip, compress, or confine the Native press of India. Far better any amount of open treasonable froth in print than secret plottings and dynamite. Given a choice of a gagged press with the everlasting fear of assassination and a free press, full of disaffection, but without any fear of the knife or bomb, and I imagine that the Viceroy would infinitely prefer the latter. When bureaucracy, however enlightened, begins to meddle with the liberty of the press, one can never tell where the interference will end. I am a great believer in allowing people to let off steam. It is far better that a hundred howling orators should preach sedition, socialism and atheism on a Sunday to indifferent and unmoved crowds in the East End, than that London should be cursed with a quiet, orderly Sunday, plus the lurking Nihilist assassin at every dark corner. Indeed, last Sunday night, after having heard six street preachers in succession dilate gloatingly on the horrors of Hell-fire which a merciful God had prepared for all humanity not sharing their particular views of religion, it was rather

a pleasure and a relief to hear the seventh arguing that there was no God at all, and no eternal punishment. One felt that after all there was a chance of something else except perdition for the 100 millions of Russia and the 260 millions of India, who appeared to have no existence in the comprehension of the bawling six evangelists. It does not necessarily follow that a newspaper of prim constitutional views is always a blessing to a country, or a disaffected one always a curse. An illustration, which may appropriately be termed a "striking" one, has occurred in connection with the great strike this week. When it commenced, that pattern of prudence and propriety, the *Times*, sided with the men, and strongly urged the dock directors to yield to their demands. More than this it did not attempt to do. For days it left them unsupported by any other leading article, at a moment, too, when powerful persistent pressure might have stopped the conflict; and although its news columns contained heart-rending accounts of the sufferings of the women and children of the 100,000 men out of work—out of work in the city which the *Times* represents—it could only open its column to a long appeal (printed in large type) for funds to "preserve the ancient monuments of Egypt!" Such appalling callousness for the starving living, and solicitude for the rubbish of the departed dead, was fit only for some Pagan rag published in China. On the other hand the half-penny Irish evening paper—a paper reeking with disloyalty to an extent never surpassed by any disaffected Babu paper in India; a paper that an Indian censor would have suppressed over and over again; a paper whose editor would in Russia have been packed off to Siberia long ago; a paper whose parochial sentiments on foreign and colonial affairs have made me many a time throw it out of the railway window in disgust—this traitorous sheet started a subscription for the wives and children of the poor English (not the poor Irish) strikers, and in a few days gathered £5,000 for them. When a disloyal Irish paper thus does for English people what a loyal English paper omits to do, one feels grateful to God that there is no censorship in England, and that generous, if wrong-headed, publications can flourish, as well as such organs of Podsnappery as the *Times*. Appreciating to the fullest the blessing of such freedom in this country, I am a relentless foe to every attempt to establish a censorship of the press in India.

It is interesting to note that while Autocracy has asserted itself so thoroughly over discontent in Russia that the press hardly exists now at all, the press in this country has gained so much on Parliament and the Crown that it is rapidly becoming the most powerful factor in the realm. No one can have watched the recent discussions in the press, of all shades of opinion, on the Royal grants, without being struck with the remarkable freedom of utterance

and consciousness of latent strength displayed by the editors. One felt in glancing through the papers that if in Russia the people are the puppet of the sovereign, in this country the sovereign is the puppet of the people. Towards Parliament, the press adopts an attitude which is deeply interesting. It is not content with everlastingly writing it down, but it exercises functions of censorship which are increasingly galling to M. P.'s. In Russia if the Government is displeased with a newspaper, it suppresses it ; and the matter that was to have moved the public mind, perishes in the limbo of the Censor Office. In England, if a newspaper is displeased with a Parliamentary debate, the editor pitches the telegraphic report into the waste-paper basket, and the wisdom of the legislators perishes in a similar fashion in the limbo of the Editorial Office. Every year the newspapers devote less and less space to Parliament. Once upon a time the press was not allowed in the House at all. Dr. Johnson had to "sneak" the debates. From listening at the back door, the reporters were allowed admittance by degrees by way of the front entrance, but their number was limited. In time, they became so numerous that the the gallery had to be repeatedly enlarged. The climax was reached ten years ago, when the mania for publishing Parliamentary reports in full reached a head. Then the press "found out" Parliament, and having become all powerful in the House, began to retort upon previous oppression by hustling M. P.'s out of the newspaper columns. A policy of suppression set in. The editor of one of largest newspapears in the provinces who was dining with me a few days ago, told me, in discussing this change, that whereas ten years ago he had his own reporters in the house, and two special wires, spending £1,000 a year on telegraphing the debates, he does not now spend £50. Instead of several columns of matter, only half-a-column or three-quarters is published, and thus a whole night's debate only filters to the public through the article of the leader-writer. The enormous power thus exercised by editors and leader-writers is obvious; for the most powerful speech becomes of no avail if an editor makes up his mind not to print it. On the other hand while the statesman or politician is allowed only a few lines or no space at all, the editor or the leader-writer addresses the public in a whole column. In this manner the editor is bound to exercise more influence than the M. P. Such a transfer of power from Parliament to the press, is not taking place without a deal of grumbling on the part of politicians, some of whom even print their own speeches and circulate them gratis in the hope (rarely realized) that the editor will give them place in their columns. This is indeed a piteous change from the time when editors used to be thrown into prison if they dared print a speech at all. What would become of Parliament if the newspapers boycotted it altogether?

NOT TOO MUCH BILE, JUST BILE ENOUGH.

LONDON, *September 20th, 1889.*

I WAS dining the other night at a club with a number of people, among whom were a young officer from Quetta and a young Russian official from St. Petersburg. The officer had recently lived in Russia, in order to learn the language, and had made there the acquaintance of the St. Petersburg official who had been sent to London on a mission on behalf of the department to which he belonged. Both had come to the club to meet me. Soup was served, and I had hardly plunged my spoon into it, when The Inevitable Subject was trotted out—the Russian advance upon India. In this wretched country, it is the custom when a man has made a name in any particular subject, for everybody to prod him with it after they have done with the weather; the supposition being that the subject must occupy every chamber of his mind, and that he can care about no other. You write, for instance, a volume on "The Classical Nomenclature of the Iky Mo," and in due process of time, find yourself famous. Thereupon, having become an ornament to society, you are invited here and invited there to meet people who do not care a rap about the Iky Mo, but who do care to be able to say that they have met a famous author, and wherever you go, you are prodded and poked with all manner of silly, idiotic, and sometimes offensive questions anent the subject that has made you a celebrity. To one person who has really read your work and can talk about the subject in a rational manner there are ninty-nine who are either bores or chatterers. What *are* you to do with the Lady Tippenses who approach you with "Delighted to meet the distinguished author of the 'Cattle Ranches of the Iky Mo:' must have taken you an age to write a book of such profundity: so charming too: really such a pleasure to meet the author face to face," &c, &c., or who put on a gushing air of ignorance, and frankly telling you that they know nothing about the book, rattle on with an artless appeal to tell them what it's all about and so forth? Ah! fame is a dead sea fruit. How many a healthy, hearty, happy young fellow goes out to India determined to never return home for good until he wears the Grand Cross of the Star of India on his breast. Years roll on, and he comes back with a grey head and the glittering bauble; but under the glitter there lies a swollen liver as heavy as lead and the owner finds that fame is a poor recompense for having parted with the power of being blithe and happy. Solomon knew something about literary

life when he said: "Would that mine enemy would write a book!" He was well aware how a lion-hunting public would bore his enemy beyond all endurance as soon as the book was out. In my case, I am doubly unfortunate. I have written a lot of books on the Russo-Indian question and a lot more on petroleum; so that wherever I go, in political, military, literary or commercial circles, I am sure to be button-holed and laid on the rack of interrogation. Personally I hate both subjects: I feel a far keener interest in a hundred others; but, no, I have been foolish enough to allow my name to be branded with both, and I see no escape from being bored by everlasting questioning about them until my tongue gives its last wag and falls down silent in its socket. Some years ago when I was at Baku I was joined in a visit to the refineries there by an Englishman interested in the oil trade. The smell of a petroleum refinery is not as delightful as the heavenly odour that always gushes from Rimmell's when your nostrils pass that Lady's Paradise in the Strand. I felt it so oppressive that I was on the point of gasping: "What a confounded stench!" when my companion threw open his chest, snuffed in the smell with a glowing face, and exclaimed: "This is a delightful odour; it puts new life in me!" He loved the odour because he scented gold in it. Years ago I knew a commercial traveller who had to call upon manufacturers of manures. At first he loathed the business, but having found it lucrative, his taste changed the other way. One evening I called upon him. He was sitting at an open window, outside which were pots containing roses, mignonette, and other sweet-smelling flowers. But the odour that greeted me was not of the rose, but of decayed bone and blood; and I wondered where on earth it came from, when the commercial traveller, removing his pipe from his mouth and laughing heartily, replied to my enquiring eyes and the writhing handkerchief concealing my offended nostrils by pointing to the pots, the surface of which were covered with a top-dressing of somebody's patent manure, and exclaimed: "I sprinkle it on Sundays inside the pots and like to sit within reach of the smell. It seems to bring me luck."

I suppose, therefore, I ought to be equally fond of the subjects with which my name is identified, and feel obliged at everybody butting me with them when I dine out; but if the confession must be made, I prefer having nothing to do with them when I stir from my study. The French say that one gets tired even of partridges if one has them too often. But if the partridges pall upon the guests, how about the poor cooks in the kitchen? How doubly hard their fate, when they are made to eat their everlasting partridges as well as cook them. Yet that is too often an author's experience. Our friend, the Iky Mo man, for instance, spends all day cooking the classical nomenclature of the Iky Mo in his study, and on going out at night

to dine and enjoy himself, finds himself compelled to eat Iky Mo with every dish served round the table. Is it wonderful that so many clever men turn pessimists? Were it not for a stern determination to be jolly under any circumstances, I should survey the world through an inky medium, so unutterably bored do I feel at times at having my inevitable subjects everlastingly ladled over my unoffending head. However, there are exceptions to every rule, and in the particular case to which I refer, although we crossed the Caspian with our soup, examined Merv with the fish, discussed the defence of Herat during the *entrée*, chose a fighting ground on the Helmund while eating the roast, and participated in the smash up of the British defensive line during the interval between the sweets and cheese, the officer entered into the spirit of the question so vigorously that the conversation for once imparted a relish to the dinner. But there was one remark he made that struck me very much at the time. He confessed to me very frankly that, although he had been a couple of years at Quetta and another in Russia, he had made no attempt at all to study the question of Indian defence. "My work," he said apologetically, "would be to fight, not to plan—that would be the task of the older heads of the army; but there are some things you have mentioned that have struck my fancy, and I should like to work them out and make them known when I get back to India." Thereupon I recommended he should do this in the form of a properly prepared pamphlet as being the quickest method of educating military and press opinion, and to encourage him I appealed to his self-interest by pointing out that a powerful pamphlet might not be without influence on his promotion. On which he remarked: "Excuse me, Mr. Marvin, saying it, but I think you are putting this on rather a low and sordid level. I feel I ought to do what I proposed doing, not from any selfish personal motive, but out of sheer love for my country." "I am inexpressibly delighted to hear you say so," I replied, "If I had been discussing the matter with our Russian friend across the table, I should have appealed to his patriotism to induce him to carry out what you proposed doing, and he would have understood me. You have mixed with Russians and know how intensely patriotic they are. But when you appeal to an Englishman on patriotic grounds, you speak a language that perished with his ancestors. The present generation has only a dim idea of what patriotism really is."

The officer had done more than merely learn the language by going to Russia; he had caught a little of that patriotic spirit which is so delightful and refreshing after the shallow short-sighted sordid veiws that predominate in London. When my Russian friends talk to me about my books, they ask me how far I have been successful in exercising influence with them. When my English friends talk about them, they enquire what I have made by the books: influence

counts for nothing so long as plenty of cash has come in. If, in talking to Russians, I mention that I published such and such a book at a loss, and resolved beforehand to publish it at any cost, even at a loss, because I felt impelled to do so from motives of patriotism, I say so freely and frankly, because I know that ninety-nine out of every hundred Russians would do the same if in my place, and that there is nothing remarkable in their eyes in my explanation; If, however, I am pressed in this country to explain why I have persisted in writing and publishing a book at a loss, my tongue hesitates to reply with the word "Patriotism," because to ninety-nine out of every hundred Englishmen, a man who wastes his time on patriotism instead of spending it in making money is a faddist or a simpleton. The average Englishman cannot understand such an explanation or he doesn't believe it. The appreciation of patriotism which pervades Russian society, from the Tzar to the peasant, and manifests itself in a thousand delightful forms in Russian literature, the press, and in every circle in the capital, as well as among high and low in the provinces, is altogether non-existent in this country. We can teach India many things, but she will have to apply to Russia to learn how to be patriotic.

As a petroleum expert, I am brought in contact with all manner of commercial people, because petroleum is an industry with ramifications in every direction and causes me to be consulted by financiers, ship-builders, railway engineers, manufacturers of pipes and tanks, well-borers, lampmakers, oil brokers, chemists, gas managers, and representatives of other trades and occupations. From petroleum the conversation often turns to politics, and the opinion I express is not that of a soured recluse but of a more or less man of the world when I assert that so little feeling of genuine love of my land exists among the commercial classes of this country, that, were our retention of India simply and solely an interest of those classes, and not of the masses, I would not lift my little finger to prevent the Russians kicking us out of our Eastern Empire. No, the British merchant and the British manufacturer are not patriotic. They never turn their face towards the Almighty and declaim in the grand old passionate language of the inspired Psalmist:—"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning." Such patriotic feeling as this is beyond their comprehension. They are mere cosmopolitan money grubs. The notion that men of means are the safest guardians of English honour is a sheer fallacy. Was there ever a Parliament in which the capitalist and the shopkeeper were better represented than in the Gladstone Government of 1880-85? It was essentially a Parliament of the commercial classes, and distinguished itself by adding Maiwand, Majuba Hill, Tokar, Sinkat, Khartoum and Penjdeh to the black roll

of English humiliation. And who relieved us of the Galdstonian incubus? Not the commercial classes; but the masses. The moment the masses got a vote, they drove out the Gladstonians, bag and baggage, and taught English professional politicians a lesson which has not been forgotten since.

In India, you have many English merchants who, if the Russians broke through Quetta, and the people rose in revolt, would be totally ruined. They have therefore something more than a purely platonic interest in the preservation of English rule in India. Now the adoption of adequate measures for safeguarding India from Russia by the Indian Government is only possible if Simla be properly supported by the authorities at home, and that proper support in turn is only likely to be given if the home authorities be supported and pressed by public opinion. Whoever endeavours to educate English public opinion to a keen sense of the necessity of supporting the Home Government in any measures it may order Simla to execute to safeguard India, ought, therefore, in theory, to enjoy the sympathy of the commercial classes out there, who fatten and batten on India. Yet so far from this being really the case, I have unfortunately to admit that while I have received hundreds of letters from working men thanking me for what I have done on behalf of Indian defence, I have never yet, in the whole course of my political career, received a single similar letter from any Englishman of business in the East. Happening to mention this to Arminius Vambéry when last in England, he told me that his experience was precisely the same. Yet the day after he told me this, two ex-commanders-in-chief publicly testified in Exeter Hall to the invaluable service Vambéry had rendered by educating them, as well as the public, in the great question of Indian defence. Had Vambéry done for Russia what he has done for England, the Muscovite traders in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras would not have forgotten the obligation. To have suitably acknowledged it would have been to them a matter of course—they would have required no hard prodding to render them grateful. But it is different with the English commercial man at home and in India. He cannot understand a man doing anything and not making money out of it. "The light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not." The other day, I beckoned a porter at Cannon-street Station to take my "Gladstone." "Excuse me, sir," he said, as he stood on the step of the carriage, "but what might those papers be," pointing to my usual litter in the corner. "Russian chiefly," I replied. "He rejoined, "We've been wondering what they were. I've often taken them out of the carriage." When we reached the counter of the cloak-room he observed my name on the bottom of the bag and excused himself again for asking the question, but was I *the* Charles

Marvin who, &c., &c., &c., running on into compliments, which I cut short as quick as I could, for if there is anything I dislike more than to be bored with talk about my books, it is to be bored with talk about myself. However, this porter was not a commercial footpad, spooning flap-doodle down the throat of my vanity while stealing all he could of my brains; but was an ex-soldier, who had marched from Kabul to Kandahar and had taken a far more intelligent interest in "what it was all about," than the young officer I have referred to at the head of this letter. He told me the books he had read—a curiously comprehensive list—and he referred at length to my popular three-penny pamphlet "Russia's Power of Attacking India." "I saw it at Stoneham's in Cheapside one day," he said "and it was just what I wanted, because the chaps were all arguing about India, and somehow authors don't seem to be able to hit their lingo and go straight for their hearts like you do, sir. I bought four copies of that pamphlet, and they were all worn to rags. Here's one of them," producing a well-thumbed and dog-eared copy from his jacket pocket.

And this was the kind of man, the man of the masses, the Conservatives were afraid to give the vote to, for fear he should be unpatriotic and let the Empire fall to pieces This man had spent a "bob" on the defence of India. What proportion that "bob" bore to his average income I cannot say; but I will ask this—has any English merchant in India ever done as much in proportion to *his* income as that Cannon-street porter.

THE "TIMES" DISCOVERS RUSSIA.

LONDON, *October 11th, 1889.*

THE Old Lady of Printing House-square has suddenly become conscious of the existence of Russia. During the past week it has published more telegrams from its correspondent at St. Petersburg than it had done the whole of the previous six months. Perhaps the till, which was so empty a short time ago that the shareholders of the *Times* had to be denied their current dividends, has been unexpectedly replenished. Or may be, Mr. Buckle has gone on his holidays, and some other suckling of journalism has taken his place, who considers that the universe contains other countries besides Ireland. Whatever the cause, it is refreshing to read a little non-Irish news in the *Times*, and not have to wait for Russian intelligence until the St. Petersburg papers arrive four days after the event.

Two items of news this week are of particular importance. One is the enlargement of the army of the Caucasus; the other the projected construction of a Russian railway to Meshed. Both have an important bearing on the defence of India and the future of Armenia, but this fact is apparently unknown to the *Times*, which has not published a line of comment on the intelligence, although it has managed to print eight leading articles on Ireland in the last six days. I do not know how such assiduous cultivation of little interests, and scandalous neglect of great ones, may strike Indian readers ; but it seems to me that from the point of view of patriotism the *Times*, is quite as great an offender against the welfare of the Empire as Messrs. Parnell, Healy, O'Connor, Connybeare and Tanner. In its columns the *Times* allows no platform for anybody who has not something to say about Ireland. It charges the Home Rulers with attempting to pull down the Empire, and yet there is no paper which so scandalously neglects the interests of that Empire as the *Times*. If we lost Ireland, not an English workingman would be thrown out of work : if we lost India, millions would be involved in ruin. Yet while columns are devoted to the consideration of some wild Irish speech, calculated to do no real harm except to the raving orator who delivered it, the approach of the Russian locomotive to Meshed, within easy disance of that new frontier which Lord Dufferin recently warned us we must fight for, rather than permit it to be pierced, is treated as a matter of not the slightest importance. How, after almost daily instances of similar neglect of England's Imperial interests, the *Times* can be permitted to pose as a saviour of the Empire, is beyond my comprehension. Speaking as one who is totally devoid of all feeling of sympathy or liking for Mr. Parnell and his followers, I candidly confess that I hope the Pigott libel case will result in the removal of the *Times* from the sphere of English journalism. Indian readers know only of the persistent neglect of India's interests in the *Times* or, what is worse, the incessant slanders of the *Times'* Rangoon correspondent—a scandal to journalism in general ; but they do not know, perhaps, that similar charges of neglect or gross unfairness comes from almost every colony of the Empire. In its time the "organ of middle-class cussedness," as a Yankee friend of mine always terms the *Times*, has done a considerable amount of good, but it has also wrought an enormous amount of evil. Not the least of these has been the keeping open the sore between England and Ireland instead of trying to heal it.

The Russian railway to Meshed I forecasted in your columns some months ago. It has long been a pet idea of Prince Dondukoff Korsakoff, and the Prince mostly manages to get his pet ideas carried into effect. The proposal, as now put forward, is more important than it was in the earlier stage. The original idea was to utilize

the military road Russia has finished from Askabad to the Persian frontier, and carry on the line in that direction to Meshed. This is now improved upon by the proposal to start, not from Askabad, but from Dushak, where the Transcaspian Railway strikes off in the opposite direction towards Merv. This would involve only 100 miles of line instead of 200: it would give Russia two roads to Meshed—namely a railway and a military road—instead of a railway only; it would enable troops from Turkestan and Merv to be thrown with greater ease into Meshed, and it would tie by a railway the great natural fortress of Kelat-i-Nadiri with Meshed, and any future railway extensions in the direction of India. It does not require much knowledge of military affairs to recognise that such a line would immensely develop Russia's attacking power on the Afghan confines. Although the Russian flag might not for a time wave over Meshed, that city would expand under the influence of Russian trade and become more and more a magazine for the ultimate benefit of any army passing through it in the future, bound for Herat and the Helmund.

While Russia is planning this strategical extension of the Transcaspian Railway to Meshed, and constructing beyond Samarkhand the final section of the line to Tashkent, she is also devoting attention to the improvement of the starting point on the Caspian. This matter has been for some time past on the carpet. The Port of Azoun Ada, in common with the previous starting point of Mikhail Oosk, has never given complete satisfaction, and a partial decision has been arrived at to extend the railway from Molla Kari to Krasnovodsk, 94 miles further west, and make use of that naturally excellent harbour. Regarding the merits of Krasnovodsk, General Annenkoff has never had any serious doubts, but it has always been his policy to push the line onwards to Samarkhand and Tashkent, rather than to spend money on a substantial starting point; for, had he obtained money for the latter, the extensions might have been put off for a long time for financial reasons, whereas now that Bokhara and Samarkhand are joined to the Caspian, his enemy the Minister of Finance is unable to withstand the clamour of traders and generals to give so important a line a proper port. In this manner, outside clamour does for Annenkoff what he would have had to have done himself by private official pressure, had he made the line from Molla Kari to Krasnovodsk first, instead of the sections from Merv to the Oxus and from the Oxus to Samarkhand. There has thus been a method in the general's impetuosity and disregard for solidity of construction which is worthy of the highest praise.

With regard to the increase in the army of the Caucasus, I would like to see the *Gazette* announcing the change before expressing any opinion on its strategical signification. To a certain extent,

it would appear that Russia who depleted the garrison of the Caucasus last autumn to mass a powerful force on the Austro-German frontier, has again expanded the Caucasian army. The real menace, therefore, is more in the direction of Vienna than Erzeroum; but at the same time when the position of the new reinforcements is known, a light will probably be thrown upon Russian aims in Armenia. It has been a noteworthy feature of Russian policy, that ever since the Treaty of Berlin, the Tzar has done nothing to disturb the *status quo* on the Asia Minor border. Turkey has been left all these years unharassed by any menacing movements on one side of the frontier, or insidious intrigues on the other. If she has not availed herself of this eleven years of grace to put her house in order, she alone is to blame. Latterly, the disorders in Armenia have excited a strong feeling in Europe against the Turk, and it is not wonderful that it should spread also to Russia where there is a large and influential Armenian population. At present, Russia may, or may not, have decided upon her future policy in that quarter; but one thing is pretty certain: if England persists in doing as little as she is doing now to protect the Armenians, and the Kurds continue their misdeeds, the ground will be prepared for an Armenian revolt, in which case there would be a danger of Russian military interference. No one would oppose such an intervention more than myself; but the fact remains that by our cold and negative policy in Asia Minor, we are doing our utmost to favour Russia's future fortune. The policy of Podsnappery pursued by England in the East since Lord Beaconsfield died, is bound to be productive of humiliation and failure. The *Daily News* is doubtless trying to make party capital out of the atrocities in Crete; but concurrent testimony makes it clear that coercion of a cruel character has been employed by the Turks, and the *Times* and other Government papers will not hide it from the whole world simply by boycotting the subject in their own columns. English politicians imagine that when they imitate Mr. Podsnap and exclaim: "Don't talk to me of Turkish atrocities, the public have had enough of them," that they sweep the evil out of existence; but the Greeks and the Armenians, to say nothing of the Russians, take a very different view of the misrule, and plot for the Sick Man's downfall. How can Salisbury, however, think out thoughtfully the Armenian question when nineteen-twentieths of his time is occupied in cogitating over the tricks and manœuvres of Parnell and Gladstone?



QUEEN ANNE'S DEAD,

OR

A JOURNEY IN JERKS TO BOKHARA.

LONDON, *December 18th, 1889.*

THE Russian Minister of War publishes every quarter a useful and interesting list of new books added to the splendid library of the General Staff. Where naval and military matters are concerned, the Russian Government is a generous spender of the public money, and is perhaps the most munificent patron of military literature in Europe. For this reason, the list it publishes each quarter, of books purchased for the General Staff Library, is as comprehensive as any military student could desire, for it includes not only the best Russian books, but also the latest productions of Germany, France, Italy, England, America and other countries. These lists I have often held in my hand, and have rarely scanned them without a certain feeling of humiliation that English military literature should occupy such an insignificant and paltry position side by side with that of other European States. It is not simply that England is incomparably inferior to Germany, to France, and to Russia, but she cuts a poor figure even alongside Italy—a country of only yesterday's creation. Our officers turn out a fair amount of books on sport, and occasionally but at very rare intervals, a readable novel, but when it comes to professional works dealing with the latest developments of war, or histories of bygone operations, they display a lamentable want of energy and capacity. In forming our Empire in various parts of the world, we have waged innumerable campaigns; yet to look at the meagre collection of military histories published during the last ten years, one would fancy that the Empire was devoid of all military traditions. The Russians, the Germans and the French are always overhauling their old wars, and writing something fresh about them. In this country, our officers leave the task to civilian journalists, who re-write them to amuse little boys and their nurses. To avoid going too far back into ancient history, if one wanted a good all-round critical military history of our wars in South Africa, or in Egypt, or in Burma or Afghanistan, where could one find it? Mere bits of books, such as diaries, personal reminiscences, and so forth, of each of our wars can be found by the cart-load in second-hand bookshops, but where are the general surveys of the whole operations by the professional military critic?

England is constantly menaced by two possible wars—a European war between the League of Peace on the one hand, and Russia and France on the other, in which it is held she would almost assuredly be involved; and an Asiatic war between Russia and herself in regard to Persia, Afghanistan or India. Theoretically the army should take a keen interest in both of these possible wars, but to judge from what military men have published on the subject, a stranger might imagine that they cared no more for it than the dead warriors of Greece and Rome whose interest in mundane affairs passed away ages ago. Petulent military pedants, like Colonel Maurice, sometimes complain of the ignorance of the public on matters of Imperial defence. Whose fault is it ? What do military men do to enlighten the people ? Nothing. They complain that the public is apathetic"—what about the Army ? Has there been a single decent military work published the last ten years on the defence of India? I don't mean mere incidental references to Indian defence in occasional books of travel; but a clear all-round critical account of the position of the two Powers in the East ? If there is, I have not seen it. And if it has not been available for the instruction of the public what right have military pedants to abuse that public for being ignorant, apathetic, and devoid of patriotic spirit ?

I am moved to ask these questions by a work that has just been placed in my hands. It is a book written for the public and published by a popular publisher (R Bentley and Son) in order that the public may hear of it, see it, and buy it. It is called *From London to Bokhara, and a Ride through Persia* ; and the author is Colonel A. Le Messurier, R. E. who wrote years ago a bald account of *Kandahar in 1879* and afterwards a book on the water-birds of India. Colonel Le Messurier had occasion to return to his duties in India in 1887, and took the overland route viâ Russia and Persia as far as the Persian Gulf, branching off from the Caspian, while on the way. to have a look at the Transcaspian railway and the city of Bokhara. The book is a record of what he saw.

I have headed this article "Queen Anne's Dead, or a Journey in Jerks to Bokhara," because Colonel Le Messurier has thought fit to adopt the immortal jerkey style of Mr. Jingle in Pickwick to convey to the public a large amount of information which the public already knows, and which would be only fresh to some dunce of a country schoolboy. What should we say if a Russian were to come to London and describe our Metropolis something after this style:—"Arrived in London last night. Railways run into it, the river runs out of it. The river is called the Thames, it runs into the sea ; the sea into the ocean, Busses ply in the street. Penny fares

are common: four farthings make a penny. The houses are built of brick—bricks are manufactured from clay: clay's clayey. Slept last night; had breakfast this morning—ham and eggs; chickens lay eggs. Went for a walk. Saw Trafalgar-square, with Nelson on a column, Nelson is said to have been killed at Trafalgar. He was the son of his mother. Met Dr. B——. Lunched at K's Then to the Tower. It is a stone fortress, apparently an old one. They used to chop off people's heads there once. When they were off they were not on. Dined at L's. Several ladies were there. They put their food into their mouths and chewed it with their teeth. English ladies have thumbs on their hands, and fingers. M. pointed out Wellington's monument as we walked back to the hotel. Wellington is said to have won the battle of Waterloo Waterloo is in Belgium. The moon shone brightly. Bought a box of matches in the street. It contained 67; when I had struck one there were 66 left. All the rooms in the hotel have doors, and the doors handles. They have windows as well. M. told me that there are sometimes fogs in London. Turned in at 12—twelve o'clock is midnight Very tired after the exhaustive survey of the day. Fell asleep as soon as I had left off being awake. When I was asleep my eyes were shut, and my mouth open, and I may have snored."

Colonel Le Messurier writes after this scrappy style and spins page after page of short commonplace sentences with a complacency that requires to be rudely awakened. He travelled through interesting countries and he saw interesting sights, yet he writes as dull a book as has probably ever been written on Central Asia. I open the book at random and reproduce a quarter of a page from page 237—"Visited some gardens, saw frescoes in summer-houses, Fateh Ali Shah's palace, etc. Dinner-party at home (Mrs. Wells's pretty house) at which the Turkish Ambassador was present. Another day devoted to writing English letters for the mail-bag. Received a very nice letter from Mr. Nicolson; he says my memorandum will go to-day Called on Mr. Pratt, the American minister. Breakfasted with Prince Dolgorouki, meeting the different officers of the Russian embassy. Visited some gardens of the Shah." Take the opposite page—"Prince Dolgorouki called, also the Colonel of the Russian Cossacks. Went for a walk along the ramparts- huge mounds of earth taken from a very deep ditch. Dined at Dr. Odling's and there met Dr. and Mrs. Torrens, of the American Mission. The next morning was spent at the telegraph office, preparing notes of my route. Lunched with Captain Blumer, of the Russian service, who is engaged to drill the Persians as gunners and Cossacks. Visited the Mouchir's gardens and palace, and also a large mosque," and so on page after page for 300 mortal pages.

Now what will the military critic in Russia, Germany, or France say when he takes up this book, expecting to find it a study and a description of the Transcaspian railway and Persia and discovers it made up of a mere jingle of note-book phrases. Fancy a Colonel of the Engineers going all the way to Teheran—a city where Russians and English may meet and fight some day—and saying all he has to say about the defence of the capital of Persia in this Queen Anne sentence: "Went for a walk along the rampart —huge mounds of earth taken from a very deep ditch" Why, a Volunteer drummer boy, fresh from his marbles could have written a better account of the Teheran defence than that.

Dr. Samuel Johnson laid it down as a principle that "books of travel will be good in proportion to what a man has previously in his mind. As the Spanish proverb says: He who would bring home the wealth of the Indies must carry the wealth of the Indies with him. So it is in travelling; a man must carry knowledge with him if he would bring home knowledge." Judging from Colonel Le Messurier's volume I should say that he was either not a great reader or else that he suffered from a singularly evaporative memory. He tells us what he carried in his trunk, but not what he took in his head. The descriptions of Russia are so bald and meagre that I question whether he has ever read two books on the country. When he gets to the Caucasus, he copies a lot of facts from *Whitaker*, and the *Stateman's Year Book*, to eke out his notes, and devotes a chapter to Baku, betraying an ignorance of all that has been published on that place by a whole army of writers that is simply colossal. If an American passing through London just now were to drive in a hansom to the South Metropolitan Gas Works in the old Kent-road and after a few minutes rush through the place, were to proceed to pen a chapter on the Great Gas Strike, without troubling himself in the least to read the accounts in the newspapers of the rise and progress of the affair prepared by trained observers, what should we expect? A mere rough hearsay sketch full of errors and misconceptions all the more intensified if he had never read anything in his life about a workman's strike. This is precisely what is characteristic of Colonel Le Messurier's account of his travels. The reader sits down expecting, I will not say a banquet, but at least a juicy chop; instead of which he finds himself regaled with the weakest of water gruel. For instance, page 82:—"The lady told me that her grandsons had been educated by an English governess. I *was afterwards told* that many of the children of the rich in Russia are taught English." Every English boy who has read a single decent book of travel on Russia published within the last century knows that Russian children learn foreign languages when young, among

them English; yet we have this bit of A. B. C. of Russian travel, put gravely forward as a newly collected fact. Again, page 118:—In passing along the Akhal oasis towards Geok Tepe, a number of little towers were seen *in which it was said* that the Turkomans used to defend themselves against the Persians running from one to another when hard pressed. Now, within the last few years, at least a score of writers, English and Russian, have described these refuge towers, and Mr. Simpson published a fine picture of them in the *Illustrated London News*. Yet we have the fact put forward as a new fact picked up in the train; and even then put forward wrongly, for no *Persian* dared show his nose in Akhal, and so far from running from "one to another" when hard pressed by Kurds or rival Turkomans, the Tekkes simply bolted bang into the nearest tower and stuck there till the enemy retired. Again, page 129:—"Alikhanoff is either a Lezghien or an Avar of the Caucasus, and a Mussulman." During the Penjdeh affair, how many thousand times did the Press give Alikhanoff's biography (to be found in *The Russians at the Gates of Herat)* declaring him to be an Avar—"Alikhanoff-Avarsky" being his name in full; yet this fact is put forward as doubtful, and the fact of his being a Mussulman inserted as something original once more. Page 165:—"The Emir of Bokhara *is said* to have been educated in Russia." Everybody knows that he *has*; the newspapers have said so ten thousand times since he ascended the throne. Even in describing the Transcaspian railway, he won't take the trouble to refer to the innumerable books that state when it was begun—a fact to be ascertained as readily as the day any railway was begun in India—but say—as though the Russians veiled everything in mystery—"*apparently* commenced in 1880 by Annenkoff!" If a lazy leading-article writer put together his facts in this style, how sharp the editor would be down on him! Unfortunately, Colonel Le Messurier did not fear anybody being down on him when he handed the public his impressions of Eastern travel. I might go on citing similar pages till the reader was tired, but I have said sufficient, I think, to show that Colonel Le Messurier did not rate very highly the intellectual capacity of the public he was catering for. As for the illustrations, I feel humiliated that any Russian should ever see the outline sketches of Kazbek, Azoun Ada, and other places which resemble so closely in appearance and artistic merit, the outline sketches in penny transparent drawing-slates, that my little boy has just begged me to cut them out for him. Considering the number of splendid Russian photographs, engravings and newspaper, illustrations of Central Asia to be had so easily and so cheaply in Russia, it is an affront to the two countries to put forward such infantile productions as "pictures." If this be thought strong, I would ask any reader to compare Colonel Le Messurier's "illustrations" with those in Mr. Curzon's book just

published. Both went over the same ground, and both had the same chances, but the difference is prodigious.

In expressing my utter inability to praise *From London to Bokhara*, I trust my remarks will not be misconstrued into a personal attack on the author, who is an absolute and complete stranger to me. What I say and what I wish to insist on is this:—That the Empire expects better books from the army than the army has been giving the public of late, and that military men have no right to charge the public with being apathetic, unpatriotic, and ignorant of the defencelessness of the Empire, when they content themselves with writing such books as Colonel Le Messurier's. I do not ask that officers should all write books of travel like "Eothen," but on the other hand they ought not to spin out pap to a public accustomed to the food of adults.

PROFESSOR MAX MÜLLER ON INDIA

LONDON, *January 17th, 1889.*

THE most interesting event of the week has been the admirable address delivered by Professor Max Müller at the Royal Institution on behalf of establishing a School of Oriental Languages in connection with the Imperial Institute. The presence in the audience of a large number of noblemen and persons of rank should be noted by those discontented natives in India who labour under the erroneous belief that the English Radicals alone take any interest in the welfare of their country. If those reformers who aim at the wider participation of natives in the administration of India appealed less to the farthing rushlight of the Radical party, and more to the men of rank and culture who influence the governing classes, they would stand a better chance of seeing their dreams quickly realised. The Prince of Wales presided at the meeting and made one of his usual happy little speeches. Throughout the address of the learned Professor, he set a good example to the audience by listening well (by no means a general rule with chairmen) and evinced his approval whenever any sally went straight home. As might be expected, the Professor "laid it on thick." There were no such people as the people of India; there were no such wonderful religions. "He knew no hero greater than Keshub Chunder Sen, no heroine greater than Ramabai." It would be easy to pick holes in these and similar high flown statements. If the Professor's repertory of heroes and heroines contained no greater representatives than these it must have been a very meagre one, for, with all consideration to Keshub Chunder Sen, he cannot surely be put upon such a pedestal

as Father Damien, or a hundred other names that will occur in a moment to the average reader's memory, while the trials and tribulations of Ramabai, bad as they have been, are but a trifle compared with the sufferings of thousands of other heroines. If however the Professor indulged a little too much in superlative, the address, taken as a whole, was well adapted to remind insular Englishmen that India is not a mere land of "Niggers," and that the civilisation, the religions, and the customs of the country are entitled to more consideration and respect than they often receive at their hands.

The assumption that England is devoid of barbarism and India devoid of civilisation is a little too readily asserted and accepted by the public of this country. We send barbarians to India as well as civilised men of light and leading. It is people of this class who write down India as a land of heathen. They care nothing for the susceptibilities of the people, and regard our mission there purely as a proselitizing one, everything else being more or less immaterial. Only on Sunday, a few minutes after I had read Professor Max Müller's address in the morning paper, I came across a case of the kind in a little work issued a week or two ago at Paisley. *What I saw of India and its People*, by the Rev. R. Lawson, professes to give in a cheap and popular form, notes of a tour in 1888-89. This returned tourist speaks of the religion of the Hindus as "dreamy nonsense." It was to this type of writer that Professor Max Müller evidently referred when he declared that "we have no idea how often the feelings of the people of India are hurt by the free and easy, by the ignorant way in which we speak of what is sacred to them. No Hindu likes to hear his religion called idolatory, no Mahomedan likes to hear his religion called Mahomedanism, or Mahomed spoken of as an arch-impostor." Quite so. The religion of any man, whatever its character may be, is entitled to respectful treatment if you find it influencing him beneficially. We have our own African fetishes in the antics and doctrines of many of our Christian sects, while the mutual animosity of them all is hardly a recommendation to an outsider to join them. I often think of the spiritual tribulations that an educated Hindu must undergo in wishing to become a Christian. Mr. Lawson is dispirited because the young men of India, when they are educated, mostly refuse to join Christianity. There could hardly be any other result expected. Education implies the training of the reasoning faculty. No Hindu student worth his salt would join the Chistian religion without investigating the doctrines of the sect inviting him to join it. The investigation would probably lead to the examination of the doctrines of other sects, and the result could not but in many, if not in most cases, be the decision to join none of them, and join the very large

body of cultured men in Europe who stand outside all religions and worship God in their own particular, private way.

The world is beginning to find out that there is no inherent necessity for men to register themselves in this or the other sect, or march to Heaven in gangs, crowds, or armies. Mr. Lawson is of opinion that the reason why Native Christians are disliked is because they are invariably better Christians than their masters. "The sahib's prejudice arises from the sad fact that a true Christian servant is a standing rebuke to his own manner of life. For Christianity to the native is a reality ; to the Briton, too often it is a mere profession." The more probable reason is that the narrow and childish Christianity of the native convert is as obvious to the cultured and refined Christianity of the master as the rowdy element of the Salvation Army is disgusting to those who worship their Maker with a "quiet mind." I was at an "at home" the other day, where a Presbyterian minister of acid aspect iced the assembly by his unrestrained insistance on the orthodoxy of John Calvin. For him there was but one religion in this world—that of his own sect, and he talked of the remainder in a way that was as disagreeable to the host as to several of the foreign guests present. Tourists often complain of the fanaticism of the people of India, but in what country will one find more fanatics—religious and political—than in the British Isles ? It is not pleasant to sit alongside a man who, however polite in other respects, makes no secret of his conviction that when he dies, he will be saved, because he belongs to a certain creed or sect, while you, whatever your merits, will be eternally tortured because you have not been brought up in his particular fold. At length the Presbyterain minister put his listeners out of patience, and having uttered the remark that he hoped one day to see all India Presbyterian, whether the Russians took it or not, or anything else happened, a well known scientific man stood up, and with emphasis that was rendered all the more forcible because he was well known to be a deeply religious man, exclaimed : "Sooner than see all India Presbyterian, sir, I would go down on my bended knees and pray to God to make it all Mussalman !"

Mr. Lawson, of Paisley, claims to have come back from India with the following lesson impressed upon his mind:—"I have learned to think less of patriotism and more of the brotherhood of man. I have learned to think less of Christian doctrine and more of Christian life, for mere doctrine falls flat in a heathen land." It falls flat, he might have added, because the people already possess religions of a higher standard than the "dreamy nonsense" he fancies the faith of the Hindus to be. If that "dreamy nonsense" turns out plenty of good men and women, do the people really want those Christian doctrines at all ? Still, in another place he bewails they lack them and their

acceptance by the people he apparently rates higher than the work of civilisation accomplished by the English during the tenure of India. Bishop Heber says: "The Hindus are brave, courteous, intelligent, most eager for knowledge and improvement, sober, industrious, dutiful to parents, affectionate to their children, uniformly gentle and patient, and more easily affected by kindness and attention to their wants and feelings than any people I ever met with." It must be something more than "dreamy nonsense" that can make people have such virtues as these.

How little Christianity is properly understood by those who profess to teach it, is strikingly illustrated in the Rev. R. Lawson's book. Describing Bombay, he refers to the blowing away of the mutineers from the guns. Bombay escaped the horrors of the mutiny, with the exception of a number of Bengal sepoys who were caught spreading disaffection among the native soldiers, and were blown away from the cannon's mouth. A friend of mine, who witnessed the horrible sight, told me that the thing that impressed him most was the thin red line of British soldiers and the small blue company of British tars, who held in check the vast dusky crowds who were out that day with scowling faces to see the sight. Every European in Bombay, *missionaries and all,* were present, but they were a mere handful as compared with the natives around. And yet there was not a cry uttered, or a hand uplifted. It was the old story of the "hand of iron with the glove of velvet." These words might have been written by some pagan of the East instead of a tourist minister, so unconscious does the writer appear of the essence of Christianity. If the missionaries, as representatives of a religion of forgiveness, saw nothing inappropriate thirty years ago, when men's passions were excited, in standing in a crowd of sightseers and giving encouragement thereby to the spirit of revenge, surely one would have thought a minister of the present times would have felt shocked at such a proceeding. Unquestionably, as any right-minded religious man will immediately perceive, the only place for the missionaries that day was alongside (unless they remained at home) the men who were being done to death. They lowered their religion and stultified Christ when they took their place among the Lord Tomnoddies of Bombay. But it is so difficult for men to act up to their religion. Conventionalism is a far stronger power than Christ. Everybody went to see the sight, and the missionaries went with them. Had the Rev. R. Lawson been there, he would have probably gone as well, and thought lightly of the agonies of the men awaiting death at the mouths of the cannon. Can we imagine Christ or His disciples doing such a thing? It is such conduct as this, callous and conventional, that prevents missionaries in India reaping the results that the supporters of Exeter Hall long for.

ALIKHANOFF'S DOWNFALL.

LONDON, *January 23rd 1890.*

COLONEL ALIKHANOFF is daily expected at St. Petersburg to meet the charges brought against him by the revising officer who recently visited the district of Merv. The charges are of a varied character, but the worst alleged would appear to be the attempted massacre of a party of Turcomans who started from Merv with the intention of laying certain grievances before General Komaroff at Askabad. Years ago, acts of this sort could be perpetrated with impunity in Turkestan, and even to-day, as the recent slaughter in Siberia has revealed, they can be openly committed in the distant Asiatic possessions of the Tzar; but Merv is now, to all intents and purposes, within the sphere of European methods of administration. The telegraph extends thither, and the locomotive carries to the spot officials in a very few days after quitting St. Petersburg. The eye of the Russian ministries is consequently on the oasis, and it is impossible for that eye to wink at practices which might not only affront European civilisation, but also provoke discontent and disturbances on the Afghan frontier. Once, therefore, Alikhanoff's alleged misdeeds were reported home by Genenal Komaroff, it became necessary to take immediate steps to disavow them. The revising officer was in consequence dispatched to the district, and, as a result of his inquiries, Alikhanoff was ordered to repair to the Russian capital. Meanwhile his assistant, Colonel Bebutoff, received instructions to replace him in command.

Alikhanoff has always been a troublesome subject for officials to deal with. Men of originality and daring disdain the prime and prudent ways of the average bureaucrat. Everybody knows the career of the clever Russian Mussalman. How, from being a military cadet at Baku, he became aide-de-camp to the Grand Duke Michael, Russian Viceroy of the Caucasus. How he tumbled from this to the rank of private challenging a superior officer to fight a duel. How he joined Lomakin's disastrous Expedition of 1879 against the Turkomans, and distinguished himself as a first-class dragoon, a capital correspondent of the *Moscow Gazette*, and the clever artist of the St. Petersburg newspaper, *International Illustrated*. How he went to Merv in disguise as a trader's clerk and got raised to the position of officer again for his pains. How he manipulated and manœuvred the Merv Tekkes into surrendering their oasis to Russia; and, on being appointed Governor, followed up this success by driving the Afghans out of Penjdeh, and causing

poor Yate and Lumsden to flee ignominiously across the Paropamisus ridge and seek refuge in the valley of Herat. Raised to the rank of colonel, and made Governor of Penjdeh as well as Merv, he seemed to have before him a career as brilliant as that of Tchernayeff or Kaufmann in Turkestan. But a truce in Central Asia robbed him of these golden opportunities. Unlike twenty years earlier, when Kaufmann and Tchernayeff had merely to deal with weak Khanates having no definite frontiers, the conquest of the Turcomans brought up the Russian border flush with the picket line of Afghanistan and Persia. Russia had then to pause at the risk of war with both of those Powers, and perhaps England as well. After the boundary was fixed on the map, Russia could only advance by fomenting insurrections inside Afghanistan and Persia and throwing a protectorate over the rebels, if successful. Before long an attempt was made in Afghan Turkestan, where Ishaak Khan with the secret moral support of Alikhanoff, rose against the Amir. In anticipation of the revolt proving successful the Russians assembled a force on the Oxus to assist the rebel Governor. The Amir, however, crushed the insurrection so swiftly and so savagely that the elements of revolt were effectually blotted out, and the Russians, fully occupied in Europe, thought it better not to start a war in Asia under such inauspicious circumstances. This was Alihanoff's great chance. He never had another. While waiting for the next opening to occur, he amused himself by marrying the daughter of the Khan of Nakhietchevan. Since then the mobilisation of the Russian forces on the Austrian frontier, and the desire to keep England apart from the League of Peace, have caused the Emperor to rigorously interdict all adventures in Asia. The result has been a period of tranquility extremely distasteful no doubt to Alikhanoff. Merv he has probably found dull enough ; perhaps it has become duller since he married ; for marriage can be a failure at Merv as well as elsewhere. It has been suggested in the *Times* that his downfall is due to the intrigues of rivals anxious for the post. As a matter-of-fact, the Governorship of Merv is not in the least in request just now, the belief being that the next war will be in Austria rather than on the Afghan frontier. Aspiring military men, in consequence, prefer Warsaw or Kieff to Merv and Tashkent. Prince Bebutoff will probably hold the post until the question be settled about joining Merv to Turkestan or the Transcaspia to Tashkent or Askabad: a question that has been raised again within the last few weeks.

Some of the London papers have cited Alikhanoff's recall as a fresh illustration of the corruption and brutality of Russian administration in Central Asia. It is only fair to point out, however that the prompt disvowal of Alikhanoff by the Russian Government'

in a measure condones the latter. If the Emperor were always as ready to try and punish a despotic functionary, as he has shown himself in the present case, autocracy would gain immensely in the estimation of mankind. It might even happen that in process of time the administrative methods of England in India might be made to compare unfavourably with those of Russia in Central Asia. But such rapid reparation is rare in Russia. George Kennan has shown up administrative iniquities compared with which the worst crimes of Alikhanoff are but a trifle. If the history could be written of Russia's Russifying operations in the Baltic provinces during the last three years, Protestant Europe would be appalled at the record of the savage despotism. It is true that the Russians can allege that the Germans have been nearly as bad in Posen, where the Slavs have been rooted up and expelled by thousands. But two blacks do not make a white, and at the worst, the Prussian gendarme is less ferocious than the Cossack. The recall of Alikhanoff is curious, as showing that the Russian Government studies the sympathies of the Merv Tekkes more than it does those of the Germans. It is ready to sacrifice a favourite officer to please the Mervs : it does not mind how remorselessly its representatives grind down the Germans at Riga and Revel.

Among the many laudatory notices of the late Lord Napier of Magdala, I have not seen one mentioning the fact that next to General Sir Frederick Roberts he was perhaps the best English military authority on the Russian advance. When the evacuation of Kandahar was discussed, he wrote a masterly memorandum on the subject, which even now specifies the real character of the Russian advance more thoroughly than any military writer has done since. I am by no means sure that Lord Napier did not grasp the military situation in Afghanistan then, and subsequently, more completely than even Sir Charles Macgregor did. Certainly, the memorandum to which I refer, was a better statement of the Russian position and Russian aims than anything Sir Charles Macgregor ever wrote. Only a military man who had thoroughly studied and sifted every side of the subject, Russian as well as English, could have penned such a memorandum. It was written as though the writer had laboured under the impression that he might have to command the army, and had therefore prepared himself thoroughly for the post. It is a pity that there are not more officers like him. The number of English military men one meets, possessing an adequate knowledge of the Russian advance, is lamentably few. It is not much to the professional or patriotic credit of military men that they should have to be tempted by special pay and extra grants to learn even the Russian language. I am afraid they will never take the trouble to master the problem of Indian defence as completely as

Lord Napier of Magdala did, until they are tempted by filthy lucre to do so.

The Batoum correspondent of a St. Petersburg newspaper gives a curious item of news this week in regard to the views of Russians respecting Armenia. When Batoum was on the point of being annexed, more than one Turkish speculator bought up land from his compatriots for a trifle, convinced that the rights of property would be respected by the Russians, and in consequence of the development of the port, have realised in unearned increment vast fortunes from his investment. Believing that the day is not far distant when the Russians will annex Trebizonde, several Odessa speculators are now buying up all the land and houses they can at that Turkish port. The future will show whether the speculation is a good one. The current belief at Batoum is that, if Trebizonde were annexed, the Russian naval station would be shifted thither, and the new port would be used exclusively for naval purposes, while Batoum would be resigned to commerce. Batoum is admittedly too small for the purposes of war and peace. In spite of the extension of the harbour, now pretty well complete, the accommodation for shipping is very restricted and encroaches on the reserve assigned for men of-war. Hence the hankering for Trebizonde.

THE RISING TIDE OF POPULAR FEELING.

LONDON, *February 21st, 1890.*

THE success of the Socialists in Germany opens up a wide field of speculation. It is quite clear from the elections that the anti-despotic movement in Germany has developed to such an extent that the Emperor and Prince Bismarck will have to change their old policy of crushing popular aspirations in the direction of individual freedom. The Prussian policeman, only to be surpassed in brutality by the Siberian *gendarme*, will have to be a little more amiable to the masses. Greater freedom will have to be given to the liberty of the press, the soldier will have to stand further away from the public platform, and the bureaucrat will have to tolerate political clubs at present under the van of the Government. Fortunately for progress, the confidence dodge of the Emperor has failed. The people have preferred to be represented by the men who really know their wants and aspirations, than by the boy monarch whose tastes and feelings are those of the drill shed and barrack room.

How the Emperor will take the affront will be interesting to watch. He cannot but feel that a repetition of the old policy of gagging the Socialists will be a dangerous game to play. The Imperial Government has had its innings, the Socialists will now have theirs. It is no secret that the hatred of France by German statesmen has been largely due to a dislike of Republican institutions. and a fear that the movement might extend to Germany. In a similar manner Russia will not be pleased at this uprising of Socialism so close to her border. The success of the pen and the tongue against the sword and the bayonet is sure to encourage the Nihilists to renewed activity, and the mere demonstration alone of the populace triumphing over the bureaucracy and military will exercise a powerful effect on the Russian mind.

For years Germany and Russia have been pursuing a policy of keeping the safety-valve of public feeling screwed down. The same policy would be pursued in India if the officials there had their own way. Liberty of speech, freedom of the press, the right to priv ately associate for the pursuance of political ends—these privileges would be denied the people of India if the bureaucracy could keep them out of the country. Officials do not understand that the best way to keep people quiet is to allow them every opportunity for letting off their political gas. Far better a hundred National Indian Congresses than a single Clan-na-Gael conspiracy. Better the foulest and most offensive libels on the public platform than malevolent lies whispered at secret meetings by fanatic dynamite conspirators. Better the outspoken taunts of some clown of a newspaper critic, than the shadow of the knife dogging the official's footsteps.

It is for this reason that I am in favour of the utmost liberty of the tongue and pen in India, and regard with approval the meetings of the National Congress every year. You had one the other day. There were, I forget, how many hundred delegates present, and every man was allowed to give full vent to his gab. Has there been any political earthquake since ? The delegates have dispersed, each man going on his way satisfied and rejoicing, and if India is none the better for the talk, can any official or hidebound Tory declare with a clear conscience that India is one whit the worse ? In Russia such a meeting would have never been tolerated. The Congress delegates would have been all treated as Nihilists long ago. In Germany the Congress would have been an impossibility—the authorities would have never allowed the movement to ripen to such a point. In both cases the result would have been the same; angry feeling between rulers and ruled, popular tumults in Germany, and in Russia secret assassinations and an increase to the population of Siberia. From a political point of view it is a grave mistake, and a mistake that may some day lead to serious consequences, for

bureaucracy in India to treat with contempt and ridicule the meetings of the National Congress. The proper attitude would be one of good-natured tolerance. That is the attitude of public opinion in this country, and it is a pity that it does not prevail more generally in official ranks in India.

I am quite prepared to be told that these delegates do not really represent the people of India; that many simply represent themselves, but after all when one gets to the hard core of things, where is there not imperfect representation, in every community, old or young. Any one who knows anything of the hole-in-the-corner practices by which many an M. P. gets into Parliament will be inclined to smile at the complaints of those who indignantly describe this or the other delegate to be merely the representative of some small political club; and may not a young enthusiast pressed to the front by the zeal of other ardent babus be a better representative of India than some hoary-headed old scamp of a capitalist, who has swindled his way into affluence, and by means of his gold got elected to represent a constituency in this country ? The House of Parliament is not composed of saints only. There are scoundrels there, whose record is pretty well known in the Lobby, though it may be more or less unknown to their constituents. If this can be the case after a thousand years' growth of representative rule, we had better not be too fastidious about the National Congress of India.

The allegation that the educated men of India do not represent the people, is precisely the charge that the Tchinovniks make against every reformer in Russia. It is said that the aristocracy and native bureaucrats do not send their sons to the universities, therefore the thousands of students manufactured by the universities of India represent merely the commercial, professional or proletariat classes. That is precisely the case in Russia. The nobility have never sent their sons to the universities, nor yet the well-to-do bureaucrats. Culture is left to a lower class, and this lower class is the class with which the Russian Government is ever warring, for it claims to represent the intelligence of the people, and demands those privileges of free speech and liberty of the press which the similar class in India enjoys. Autocracy v. "Intelligentsia"—such is the battle that is being fought in Russia to-day, the term Nihilism being applied as a convenient expression for the opposition, although scarcely any are Nihilists in the narrow sense of the term. Thanks to our policy, fair play is given to the intelligence of India, despite its lacking rank and wealth ; and if the aspirations of the Indian educated classes may be dangerous, a matter on which opinions are divided, there is at least present peace in the land. There are no constant riots at Indian universities ; the Cossacks are not called to drag off hundreds of young men to exile or rustication at a stroke ;

the professors deliver their lectures without policemen standing at the door to keep their tongues from wagging too freely ; and the students do not go home at night to secretly plot how to assassinate this or the other functionary and dynamite the Viceroy. This is a tranquil condition of things. Some officials in India would change to a turbulent Russian aspect by "checking the license of the press," putting a stop to "seditious meetings," exercising control over "sham congresses" and so forth. If they would take the trouble to read Mr. George Kennan's articles on Nihilism in the *Century* magazine they would thank God that things are as they are in India, and leave well alone.

The bureaucrat in any country is no proper judge of what constitutes "license of the press," sedition at public meetings, and the representation of the people. A man of vigorous brain although poor, young, and struggling, may be a better representative of the people than the most elaborate product of the polling book. The vestry elections of England are carried out with that systematic skill and immunity from undue influence, which a bureaucrat in India might take as a model to-morrow if called upon to devise a better means of forming a representative congress than the rough-and-ready methods at present in use. Almost everybody has a vote, and there is nothing to prevent him using it freely, yet it is matter of common notoriety that the average vestryman has a thick head, a thick skull, and the braying voice of the jackass. Even in America, it is well to remember, the House of Representatives by no means represents the culture of the country. In England it would be deemed an insult to ask a gentleman (using the term in its special social sense) to be a vestryman. In the States, the social aristocracy leaves politics to the "Caucus cuss" and carpet-bagger.

Besides, representation may be forced upon a person independently of his own efforts. Any man who takes up a topic and handles it until he commands attention, qualifies himself to be a representative at a congress, where that topic is fixed to be discussed, notwithstanding that he owns nothing besides what he stands up in, and has not gone through the process of red tape election. He may not arrive at the congress the duly elected delegate of a great city, but he is there with brains in his head, whatever the paucity of cash in his pocket, and if the process of election does not bring brains to the front, one ought to be gratified that exterior circumstances exist outside man's clumsy efforts which enable the intellect of a country to be represented, as well as the sword or the cash-box. In free countries men who can vigorously use tongue and pen become in time, even if the most modest in the matter of self-advancement, representatives of the people, independent of the ballot box or the machinery of Governmental administration.

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The more amicable the relations between such men and the bureaucracy, the better for the peace and progress of the countries. In Germany the relations have been hostile, and repression has caused the people to send a larger number of opponents than ever to confront the Government. In India the dislike of the officials has been held in check by English public opinion, and the Viceroy in consequence has not got arrayed against him the hostile forces which threaten the stability of Germany and make Russian rule a bye-word for cruelty, tempered by assassination.

GREAT WHALES & LITTLE FISHES.

LONDON, *March 21st, 1890.*

I SUPPOSE I ought to take some notice of the letter from a "Presbyterian Missionary" published in your columns the other day, complaining that in an article on Prof. Max Müller and the Rev. R. Lawson, I had given too little attention to the whale and too much attention to the whitebait. I ought to have said less about Mr. Lawson, who was only a Presbyterian pastor of an obscure parish in Scotland, and more about Prof. Max Müller, who had dared to abuse a world-wide reputation to puff the religions of the people of India. Well, in the first place, standards vary. What are sprats to some men are whales to others, and in spite of their insignificance, the arrogance, intolerance and bigotry of the former may cause them to be more considered as fit subjects for criticism than the inflated mammal that rolls and spouts good-naturedly on the billowy surface of the ocean. An address, like a sermon, should always be suitable to the occasion. One does not read a funeral service at a wedding, or the marriage service at a burial. In the case of the Professor; the function he was called upon to fulfil, under the presidency of the Prince of Wales, was for the purposes of the Imperial Institute, to present the sunny side of India to the British public. This function he fulfilled admirably, notwithstanding that there were plenty present no doubt who knew that much of the butter was only margarine. For my part I saw plenty on the Professor's bread; but in this world a man cannot be always on the nag, and I did not exactly see why Prof. Max Müller should be punished for acting so admirably the advocate for India. Opinions differ so in some things. What may seem admirable to one man may be disgusting to another. Just now, for instance, the Kirks and congregations in Scotland are greatly excited over the question whether an unbaptized child

goes to Hell. The hoary orthodox cling fiercely to the grim old doctrine of the time of the witches. The party of reform wish to blot out such a brutal and brutalizing doctrine from the creed of the Church. The Presbyterian, Mr. Lawson, from Paisley, described the religion of the Hindus as "dreamy nonsense." Personally, I could travel a long way with Prof. Müller and find plenty to admire and embrace in the religions of India, Islamic and otherwise, before I could accept such a dreadful doctrine as that. Any reasoning and reasonable man who possesses an exalted conception of the character of Christ and the tendency of His teaching, must feel that He could never have been what he professed to be had he really intented the external immolation of innocent children who happened to die before a few drops of water could be sprinkled upon them.

In this country we have no pagans of the Indian sort, worshipping carved or brazen images, but we have plenty of pagans of the spiritual sort, who exalt fetish opinions and doctrines, and prostrate themselves fanatically before them. A great ecclesiastical trial is in progress to settle the point whether the Bishop of Lincoln shall be allowed to place three lighted candles on the altar or not. For my part, I should say that if the Bishop cannot pray without the aid of three lit candles, let him have them; and for that matter thirty if he likes, but how can we charitably call the religions of India "dreamy nonsense" when we find a great gathering of dignatories of the Church of England wagging their tongues solemnly week after week over such a puerile and paltry point in religion as to whether prayers should be said by candlelight or not. When one reflects on the misery and sorrow to be found in all our cities, one feels that the Bishop would be better employed among the poor of the diocese than wasting thousands of pounds of his own and other people's money over three dollops of tallow or stearine

"Presbyterian Minister" need have no fear that I shall imitate the Theosophists and run after the strange religions of the East. Such fads are suitable only to the class of people who take them up. I have done my level best to understand Theosophy, but so far it has been all gammon and no spinach. When I get into my dotage I think I shall perhaps be able to understand the cult, but for the moment my comprehension cannot encompass it. Yet there are many who profess Theosophy, and what is more curious, among their number are persons who cannot be accused of having taken it up as a fashionable fad. I was travelling the other day in a third-class carriage on the South-Eastern Railway when a young man, by no means a religious noodle in aspect, but having a serious thoughtful

face, handed every one a long and elaborate tract on Theosophy. I read mine through very carefully, and I must confess that when I had got to the end of the juggle of words I was about as wise as when I commenced. There was not a point in the whole production which I could pin my soul on, or which seemed calculated to draw it from the fold of Christianity to the parlour of Madame Blavatsky. Such a jelly-fish faith can have no future. However much the tracts distributed by Christian sects in this country may occasionally border on blasphemous absurdity, they at least invariably contain something that the simplest can understand, notwithstanding that that something may be wrong. I am quite aware that the "simplest" can also understand Theosophy but it is the "simplest" in the narrow and not the general sense of the term. One thing alone seems clear, and that is that there is nothing good in Theosophy which cannot be found in a hundredfold better form in Christianity. When I say that there may be something good in the cult, I mean what the disciples themselves hold out as good features of their doctrines whenever they abandon the jargon of the doctrines and use plain colloquial language.

The spirit of charity is, as Tolstoi has just been reminding the world, the soul and essence of Christ's teaching, however little it may enter into the practice of those who profess to carry on that teaching now. Looking at the matter from a Christian standpoint I cannot understand an English missionary standing among a crowd of sightseers and watching, as a sightseer, the death-terrors of an Indian condemned to be blown from the gun. I am no sentimentalist myself. I am quite convinced that had I been out in the thick of the mutiny, the kid gloves would have been off my hands sharp and my arms quickly steeped to the elbow in gore. With the Duke of Wellington, I am a believer in prompt pounding and hard pounding when a fight is on; but at the same time, whether in the clothes of a missionary, or not in the clothes of a missionary, I could not stand in cold blood in a crowd and look callously on while a poor devil writhed at the end of a gun, or listened in agony to the signal to belch him into space. How could a missionary do such a thing, and afterwards fitly stand up among the natives, who had seen him in the crowd, and exhort them to be Christians and forgive one another? Such an act stripped him of his caste as a Christian. But if in the heat and excitement of the mutiny a missionary so far forgot what was due to his faith, and looked on the execution of the wretched natives with the eyes of a common sightseer, what are we to think of another missionary (Rev. R.) Lawson) who, thirty years afterwards, calmly records the fact and sees nothing unusual or reprehensible in it? Can we imagine Father Damien doing such a thing? He would have either been

away from the mob, hunting up the poor wretches's wives and children, or else, if present, would have been alongside the doomed, praying for them, whether they cared for his prayers or not.

The good-natured tolerance of whales like Prof Max Müller does very little harm. Their opinions do not affect one s daily life. It is different with our sectarian sprats, for they not only look with contempt on the religions of other people abroad, but also strive to spiritually repress and restrain their countrymen at home. I could tolerate their abuse of Indian pagans, for mud thrown at Benares does not much harm to Plumstead Common, but when I find them striving to coerce me into spending Sunday, say, in a way, intolerable to the flesh and spirit, then my fist goes forth against these Lilliputian Torquemadas to protect my personal liberty from barbarian encroachment. That liberty I have never exposed to ruthless assault by spending a Sunday north of the Tweed, but even in liberal London it is only by hard fighting against the pagans of Christianity that it has been possible for men to have some other means of spending Sunday otherwise than at the church or the public-house. No one can traverse London streets on a Sunday night and watch the tens of thousands of men and women walking listlessly hither and thither, with nothing to interest or amuse them, without feeling grateful to the Salvation Army, who have, by their bands of music, broken the Puritanic spell and paved the way for a brighter and better method of spending every seventh day than the doleful and dirge-like manner common in many parts of England. No one likes to be confined before his time, yet there are powerful sects who aim at screwing mankind into a moral grave one-seventh his natural existence. Against this the London masses are rapidly revolting, and, in the meantime I must candidly confess that I should like those sects to mellow a little more before thy enjoy too great a success in India.

RUSSIA'S NEW LEADER ON THE AFGHAN FRONTIER.

LONDON, *April 18th, 1890.*

THE Gazette in the Russian official journal this week announces the appointment of Kouropatkin to be Governor of Transcaspia, coupled with his elevation by the Emperor to the rank of Lieutenant General "for excellence in service." Some weeks ago I mentioned that Kouropatkin would probably prove the successor of

Komaroff in the reconstructed province, and the report now turns out to be true. The change is one of great importance A military mediocrity and administrative failure is replaced on the Afghan fron'ier by one of Russia's best generals Komaroff, the Russians admit, has not proved a success. The two important events of his administration—the capture of Merv and the raid upon Penjdeh—were the work of his subordinate, Alikhanoff, who followed his own policy rather than that of his chief. Komaroff, in many respects, was like Emin Pasha He was never happier than when chasing a rare butterfly, or poking his nose among old ruins for rusty Asiatic coins. There is nothing objectionable about tastes of this kind but they need to be kept in their place when a man is in charge of a newly-acquired country, the administrative building up of which rests upon his shoulders. I was smoking the other day in a Mocca coffee house in the city, when two stock brokers alongside began discussing the crop prospects of the present spring. After a while it came out that one of them was an ardent grower of prize potatoes His friend had done business with him twenty years without being aware of the fact. As the confession proceeded it came out that this smart and even foppishly dressed gentleman was accustomed to rise at daybreak and work hard at digging, manuring, and otherwise rearing his beloved potatoes before coming to the city. Of the many prizes he had taken he spoke with a pride and a relish which quite sweetened my cup of coffee. But he added at the close of his confession "I never allow potatoes to interfere with my business." That is precisely what Komaroff did not do. He thought more of toads and scorpions and the rubbishy "coppers" of the ancients than he did of the work he was set to do, and paid to do in the Transcaspian region. The result was a crop of misrule, and instead of making for himself a name, like General Kaufmann in Turkistan, he has now got to come home and take a back seat in the affairs of the Russian Empire.

Kouropatkin is quite a different type of man. He has only one taste—war. Nothing interests him but fighting, and writing about fighting. He is a thorough professional. The picturesque side of war does not draw one drop of ink from his pen. He concerns himself entirely with the dry mathematics of a fight. He likes to know, down to the last drummer boy, how many men took part in the battle, where each man was posted, what each man fired, what were the theoretical and actual effects of the firing, and what were the definite results of the tactics employed. Personally I am very fond of military literature. I love to steep myself in gore. Nothing delights me more than a good bloody battle. But the battle must be described as a Kinglake or a Tolstoi describes battles.

I can't stand a meal of chaff. This is precisely what Kouropatkin serves up in his many voluminous histories. They are more of the character of registers of military events than flesh and blood descriptions. For the most part they are as dry as those arid histories of this or the other regiment which appear in this wretched country of ours from time to time. What makes men write these guinea "dreadfuls," and what on earth induces men to buy them? I have a lot in my library. It has fallen to me to review many in my course, and never without a shudder. Archdeacon Denison, who is as bigoted a religionist as any secluded Buddhist priest in the llamisaries of Thibet, has been recommending a short and easy way this week for dealing with Bible criticism. "Read the Bible," he says, "and read nothing that anybody may write about it." This is certainly a short way of dealing with doubt. Precisely the same advice might be given to those who may have heard that Kouropatkin is a great writer of military works—if you wish to enjoy war, don't read Kouropatkin. Leave severely alone his massive tomes with their interminable statistics, geometrical plans, and algebraic formulas, and take down instead from the shelf Tolstoi's *War and Peace* or some other delightful military novel.

Kouropatkin is best known as Skobeleff's right hand man. He was his military "man Friday." Excluding a brief term of youth in one of the Turkestan line battalions, from the age of eighteen to twenty-three, and a trip to Algeria during his staff college course, he was always acting as the chief of Skobeleff's staff, or was engaged in writing about the operations as soon as they were ended. The two were inseparables. So much did the qualities of the one fit in with and support the qualities of the other that Skobeleff's officers used to quarrel as to which was the real leader of the two. When Skobeleff was buried in Riazan seven years ago I was invited by the family to accompany the mourners in the funeral train from Moscow. The train was one of the latest built in Russia, and consisted of spacious carriages of the American type accommodating about thirty officers in each with free communication throughout. We were about fifteen hours doing the journey, and as at every big station there was a stoppage to allow the local magnates to do honour to the deceased by a funeral mass on the platform, there was very little stagnation and sleep for the officers, who had to be present in full dress at each. While on the way I was very much interested in the discussion that took place about Kouropatkin. The officers—a wild harumcarum lot—were for the most part men who had served with Skobeleff in most of his campaigns, and adored their dead leader. Yet there were among them a number who held that in the long run Kouropatkin would beat Skobeleff's record. It

was admitted that Kouropatkin had not the dare-devil dash of Skobeleff, but while he was just as brave and twice as cool he possessed greater skill than the hero of Plevna. On one point, however, all were agreed. After Skobeleff, there was no better general in the whole Russian army than Kouropatkin.

Of course personal intimacy and enthusiasm had much to do with this opinion, but that Kouropatkin was a sort of second Skobeleff was admitted at the time by the Russian Government itself. It may be remembered that when Skobeleff died he had entered upon a political career. His personal influence with the Russian people was enormous, and it was in his power to mould the foreign and home policy of Russia to an extent that excited fear and disfavour at Court. His position was such that had he been unpatriotic and self-seeking he could have made himself dangerous to the Romanoff dynasty. Hence when he died suddenly in a queer manner in queer quarters in Moscow—a hero struck down in the prime of life, with all his youthful vigour and beauty still fresh upon him—there was an ugly murmur that arose in Moscow insisting that he had been murdered by the Emperor or the Grand Dukes. Had the report been true there would have unquestionably been a rising in Moscow, for the feeling of the people for forty-eight hours was decidedly one of angry distrust towards the Court. During this period all the slights put upon Skobeleff by the dead Emperor, the Grand Dukes, and the Russian Government were freely commented upon in the plainest terms, and the Emperor had to hasten to show that he was not a party to the jealous intrigues against the dead warrior. This was done by despatching a Grand Duke to Moscow and ordering an imposing funeral, and then a sop was thrown to the Russian people by conferring a decoration on Kouropatkin, giving him a command and inviting him to present himself at Court.

Since then Kouropatkin has had no opportunity of proving whether he is a real successor of Skobeleff or not, but he has not been idle. The present defensive arrangements on the Austro-German frontier are largely the work of the planning, and he has also thoroughly worked out a scheme of attack upon India which he may yet live to put in force. It is a trite fact that had war followed the Penjdeh incident Kouropatkin would have led the army invading Afghanistan.

Such a man as this is sure to leave his stamp upon Transcapia. Placed in absolute command of the Russian base of operations against India he is bound—the bent of his mind being in the direction of planning and organizing—to devote himself energetically to the task of preparing for the invasion of Afghanistan and India.

The present Emperor may not contemplate any such operation, but the Russians, like the Germans, look miles ahead, and do not, like the English, confine themselves to the limits of the yard measure of the hour. When the railway between Baku and Tiflis was built in 1882, a grand station was built in the midst of a howling wilderness at Adji-Kabul. For such a station there was not the least local necessity, and had the railway planners been Indian or home officials they would have simply struck up a shanty. The Russian Government, however, had decided in its mind that some day a railway would probably run off from the Tiflis line to Teheran, so in anticipation of this, they built, years in advance of the event, a commodious junction station at Adji-Kabul. This policy is one that we may expect to see repeated when Kouropatkin arrives to take command of Transcaspia. With his habitual thoroughgoing seriousness he will apply himself to the organization of all the military resources of the province, taking as much pains as though he were convinced that war would break out the day after to-morrow.

DILKEING AND BILKING THE EMPIRE.

LONDON, *May 17th, 1890*.

IN this country it is the custom for men to talk or write themselves into office. The tongue is usually more potent than the pen in such a business, but where a politician can use both with freedom and skill he commonly carries all before him. Among the most brilliant examples of this rule may be cited Sir Charles Dilke. His *Greater Britain* was the success of the season when published. His subsequent speeches of a republican character made him notorious throughout the length and breadth of the land. The effervescence of youth over, he settled down to the calm and sedate career of a statesman and achieved such success over the Redistribution Bill that the Liberal party began to speak of him as the future successor of Mr. Gladstone. Suddenly in the height of his popularity occurred the Crawford divorce case, and charges of immorality were made against him which pulverized his political position to atoms. The man who one day was looked upon as the heir-apparent of the Premier, was the next day scarcely able to show his face in the street. The fallen idol promised his friends to rebut the charges of "French vice" and so forth made against him in the open Court. He has failed to do so. Then he discovered India, and applied himself to the writing of alarmist books about the weak condition of the army,

the danger of the Russian advance and the defencelessness of Canada. Apparently the object was to write himself back into office. If so he cannot be said to have been very successful. The public is no longer interested in the writing of Dilke's books: it looks for and wants the righting of Dilke's character. This will explain the icy greeting with which his latest book has been received by the general public, notwithstanding the fulsome eulogies of penny-a-liners anxious to earn the good-will of the proprietor of the *Athenæum.*

My opinion on the matter of the alleged immorality of Sir Charles Dilke was expressed pretty plainly in your columns some time ago, and need only be referred to briefly again. As a general principle, history demonstrates that capacity of ruling minus Puritanical goodness is a greater boon for a country than Puritanical goodness minus capacity for ruling. As men of real capacity are rare it is a folly for a country to be too fastidious when it is lucky enough to have a good one to lead it. Outside England there is no difference of opinion on this point, and in England itself the opinion is held by the majority of men, although they are afraid to run counter to Puritanical sentiment by expressing it too plainly on the platform or in print. For my part, I do not believe in hiding such views under a bushel. If the Puritan sentiment be wrong then it ought to be attacked as openly as any other error. I had occasion to argue the point the other day with a Nonconformist minister, who held that the slightest sexual slip, even in the intoxication of youth, ought to disable any and every man from holding a public position. He contended that a Bismarck should be made to retire under such a ruling, to make way for a Father Damien however great a failure the latter might be in managing the affairs of men. I lost patience. Seizing him by the shoulders and looking at him straight in the eyes, I exclaimed, "My dear sir, when you and I look about the world and see the immense number of blockheads in it, is it not difficult to repress the prayer that great and clever men might be more immoral?"

So that when I say what I have to say about Sir Charles Dilke bilking the Empire, no one will accuse me of being puritanically disposed towards him in regard to the unhappy—or rather, as I shall directly show, the happy—event that turned him out of office. It is a notorious defect of democratic institutions that men who talk themselves into office rarely carry out their promises to the public. Wise political observers are no more deceived by professional politicians than shrewd investors are led away by professional company promoters. They naturally look for and are not surprised at, the due appearance of a swindle. But Sir Charles was never regarded as a "carpet-bagger." His *Greater Britain* had created the impression that he was pre-eminently

a patriot. Whatever narrowness of vision might attach itself to the party to which he belonged, the feeling was general that so broad-minded a writer could not fail to prove faithful to the best traditions of the empire if ever he got into office. His rash expression of Republican views did not shake this feeling, since the passing frenzy was followed by an attitude of antiparochialism during the period of the Bulgarian atrocities and Midlothian speeches. The downfall of the Beaconsfield Ministry brought Sir Charles immediately into office. It is true that he was made the subordinate of that polite little kid-gloved muff Earl Granville, but any one who is acquainted with the inner life of English politics knows that a vigorous Parliamentary Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs can exercise a pretty powerful influence on Imperial policy. So far from this being the case with Sir Charles he adopted the worst features of Jack-in-office parochialism the moment he entered Downing Street. Without the slightest justification he ratted to the Parochials, and became a mere boot-cleaner to Earl Granville. Throughout his whole official career he never once attempted to put into practice the Imperial precepts in *Greater Britain*, and when the Crawford case ejected him from office it was impossible for his warmest admirer to put his finger on any act of the Gladstonian Government, colonial or foreign, and say, "Here Sir Charles exercised influence for good."

In the *Problems of Greater Britain* Sir Charles Dilke stands aghast at the Russian advance, and with all his might and main cries "Wolf!" He even out-Vamberies Professor Vambery; although having without acknowledgment appropriated his sentiments he is ungracious enough to ignore him as a nonentity. It is noteworthy that Sir Charles himself, this rampant Republican of yore, who wished to abolish all titles, describes himself on the title page of his book as "The Right Honourable Sir Charles Dilke, Bart." notwithstanding that in the Republic of Letters authors are accustomed to sink their titles and rely upon worth alone for their reputation with the public. Personally I am glad to see Sir Charles clamouring for the proper defence of India, but at the same time I am sorrowfully conscious that there was no member of the Liberal Government of the evil 80-'85 period who opened wider the portal to the Russian advance than Sir Charles Dilke himself. It is a notorious fact, which anyone can see demonstrated in detail in my *Russian Advance Towards India* page 35, published in 1882, that Sir Charles Dilke himself broke down the Kandahar Debate on the 25th of March 1881, by mendaciously creating the impression in the House that our retirement from Kandahar would be reciprocated by a Russian evacuation of the Transcaspian region. When the Russians, instead, permanently annexed Askabad, a

howl was raised against Russian duplicity; but as I pointed out at the time, the Russians had never made any promise to retire, nor did any of their acts point in that direction. If there had been any trickery and lying, I was compelled to confess, though a Russophobe by reputation, that the sin lay at the door of the Gladstone Government and not at that of Alexander III. No diplomatic information has since been published upsetting this view, nor does even Sir Charles himself attempt it in his recent volume He is too conscious that he bilked the Empire by pretending that the Russians were going to retire when they had no intention of retiring, and, occupied as he was with Fanny and other women, he was such a lazy guardian of our Imperial interests that he did not know even when expelled from office, that the Transcaspian Railway was a real railway and not a tram line, and was still unaware of the fact when Professor Vambery corrected the blunder in the *Fortnightly Review*. The bilking business was naturally followed by the logical sequence of events, by the swoop upon Merv, the seizure of Sarakhs, the raid upon Pul-i-Khatun and the capture of Penjdeh; the Gladstone Government, on its part, replying with the paltry pulling up of the Quetta railway and other puerile acts, which, coupled as those ignominious deeds were with Sinkat, Majuba, Khartoum and other humiliations our boys will live to revile us for, would have made any real patriot retire from office rather than be a party to such transactions. Had the noisiest Radical village cobbler been in office instead of the talented author of *Greater Britain*, the Empire could not have fared worse. When, therefore, Sir Charles tries a second time to write himself into office, I am his open, undisguised enemy. I would forgive in any English statesman, with Prince Bismarck's patriotism and Prince Bismarck's capacity, even the "French vice" anathematized by Mr. Crawford, but I have no forgiveness for the best of men who is a traitor to the Empire. And Sir Charles when in office was not the best of men, while he helped to betray to the Russians the easiest of the roads of advance upon India.

Problems of Greater Britain is, to a large extent, a padded edition of *Greater Britain*, but the padding is invariably useful. As for the additions generally, they are full of such fads as the one I exposed the other day, that the best way to check a Russian advance upon India would be to occupy Vladivostock. Sir Charles thinks Russia might bleed to death there. One might just as well try to bleed Great Britain to death by occupying the Channel Islands. Himself posing as a patriot, he has nothing but cold water and ridicule for the Imperial Federation League. Now, whether federation of the Empire be feasible or not, there is certainly one thing to be said for the League—it has done an

immense deal to educate the public into a patriotic consciousness and appreciation of England's Empire. This surely should entitle Lord Rosebery and his friends to the gratitude of the man who wrote *Greater Britain*. Anything which in any way contributes to the consolidation of the Empire secures from me sincere rejoicing, whether the act be that of a Home Ruler or Conservative, Gladstonian or Primrose gusher. But either the patriotism in *Greater Britain* was shammed by the author, or else, for political gain, he dropped the sentiment for white-livered parochialism when in office. If I were asked to specify twenty books which had influenced my thoughts more than any others, *Greater Britain* would be included in the number; but were I urged to express a very candid opinion of *Problems of Greater Britain*, I should have to declare, after laying it down, my conviction that the author is no more worthy to be trusted again with Imperial power than any carpet-bagger in the world west of America.

VAMBERY NOT TO VISIT INDIA.

EASTBOURNE, *July 24th, 1890.*

THE *Times* announced a short time ago that Professor Arminius Vambery was to visit India in the autumn. I am now informed that this journey will not come off. "Certain high authorities" have expressed their disapproval of Vambery appearing among the Mussalmans, and he has decided to yield to the pressure brought to bear upon him. The more the pity. The visit would have done Russia no harm, and would have doubtless been productive of an entertaining book of travels. When Vambery was in London in the spring he was full of his proposed visit. He unfolded his plans to me over and over again, and some of his intentions were decidedly original. Vambery lecturing at Quetta and fêted by the officers of the garrison would have been interesting, but Vambery riding alone to Kabul and discussing the Russo-Indian Question with the Amir would have been distinctly picturesque. The idea, I presume, was a little too original for our present parochial Premier. Russia might have declared war had the ex-beggar poked his inquisitive nose north-west of the Khyber. The occupation of Constantinople by a Russian army might have followed the occupation of Cabul by Vambery and his shaggy pony. What might have happened had he gone on to Herat and tried to look at the new frontier it is beyond my imagination to conceive. However, the supression of the visit is not without its compensations. We shall all sleep

in tranquil beds in Europe in the autumn, and the roar of the Russian guns will not be heard on the Indian confines. Vambery's romantic career may lose an interesting episode, but science will be enriched by the researches he intends to pursue at Constantinople instead.

Would Russia have really been so moved by Vambery's visit to India? Has our Government gained any increased respect in Russia by restraining him from making a journey to a portion of the Empire open to the rest of the world? I think not. Russia is not pursuing an active policy in Afghanistan for the moment, and I do not believe M. de Giers would have worried himself even if Vambery had paid his respects to the Amir at Kabul. Russians are too conscious of their strength in the region east of the Caspian and on the Afghan frontier to fall into fits of frantic excitement over the chance visit of a talented linguist to Abdul Rahman Khan. They would have had reason for complaint only if the Professor had ventured to intrigue beyond the frontier, and this, of course, Vambery had too much commonsense to do. No one realises more clearly than Vambery what is possible and what is impossible in the East. To have braced up the Indian Mussalmans against Russia is a matter into which Vambery would have thrown himself heart and soul. But he would have never dreamed of exciting stray Bokharans and Khivans against a Government which is now too solidly imposed upon Central Asia to be upset by the ardour of a tourist, however fervid his convictions. Vambery may be an enthusiast in championing the cause of England against Russia, but he is not a faddist. He has knocked about too much in this very rough world to have many eccentricities and missions left him. If he hates Russia, it is not because he is a Hungarian but because he is a thorough Radical, detesting all despotic Governments and all forms of social life that compress and enslave the individual. English civilisation seems to him a finer type for India to adopt than the Russian, and from the outset of his career he has always approved of the one and denounced the other.

When Vambery was the guest of the Sultan last year, Russia did not complain. When he was the guest of the Queen at Windsor, the visit was hardly referred to by the Russian Press. When the Emperor of Austria made him the mouthpiece of the Shah during his Iranic Majesty's stay at Vienna, there was no squall in the Russian diplomatic world. Why, then, assume that the visit of Vambery to India and Kabul would have been an affront to Russia? Are we really so frightened of Russia that nowadays we must hesitate in all our doings, lest we make the Cossack wild? If this is to continue when Russia is at Askabad and Merv, what will the state of feeling be when she reaches Herat and the Helmund. It would be far

better to give up India at once than degenerate into a nation of cowards.

In point of foreign policy there is not a pin to choose between the statesmen of either party at the present moment. "Surrender for fear of giving offence" is the watchword of one; "Yield, because peace is better than war" is the motto of the other. When the Conservatives were out of office they denounced the surrender of Penjdeh ; but as soon as Salisbury was in office he gave up the Khushk district to Russia. The Gladstonian failures in South Africa were the theme of many a Tory indignation speech when Salisbury was in Opposition, but he succeeded no better with Zululand and Swaziland, and one can really find nothing in his South African policy since he came into power to deserve applause. As for his policy elsewhere in Africa, it has been generally a failure. Even he himself had to apologise for the recent Anglo-German Agreement, cutting a fine figure before Europe compared with the sturdy exultation of statesmen who won the points of the game at Berlin. The chief merit claimed for it is simply that it is calculated to cement the Anglo-German understanding and make the Germans more ready to help us; but this consideration is not worth a single acre of Heligoland. Our sole serious enemy is Russia. Germany might, for the sake of herself and Austria, help us keep Russia out of Constantinople, but her statesmen frankly confess that they would not go to war with Russia merely to keep the Cossack out of India. Since, therefore, Constantinople possesses value in English eyes only because of its ancient reputation of being a milestone on the road to India—a reputation lost when Russia established her grand military position east of the Caspian, it follows that the Anglo-German alliance is really worth to us nothing at all. It is a mere phrase, invented by clever Conservative politicians to conceal the miserable blunders of their chief.

But it is said that Germany would do us harm if we did not concede to her what she wants in Africa. All the more reason for not surrendering huge slices of territory ; for if a European power, professedly friendly, be so coveteously disposed towards us our policy should be to keep her empire smaller and weaker, not assist her to enlarge it. If Germany, being a first-class power, can be angry, so ought it to be possible for England to be also angry, unless she be a miner power, which no Englishman accepts as the case as yet. If Germany, out of spite, can play Russia against England, so also can England play Russia against Germany. The Russians would far sooner fight side by side with the English against Germans, than with the Germans against ourselves. A combination of Russia, France and England would reduce Germany, even aided by Austria and Italy, to a very inferior position in European affairs. The

consciousness of this should really impart more pluck to English policy. We should be above being deferential to Russia and Germany at every turn of European affairs. We won our empire by courage not by cowardice. We shall certainly lose the Indian portion of it if we persist in our present policy of poltroonery in foreign affairs.

RUSSIA'S RAILWAY ADVANCE INTO CENTRAL ASIA.

EASTBOURNE, *August 7th, 1890.*

FAR too little attention has been given by the press to a work just published by W. H. Allen & Co., the publishers to the India Office, dealing with the Russian railway advance into Central Asia. The author is Mr. George Dobson, who for many years past has represented the *Times* at St. Petersburg. Mr. Dobson's telegraphic news appeared in the *Times* long before Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace wrote his famous book on Russia, and but for Mr. Dobson the career of the late Secretary to Earl Dufferin in India might have been of a totally different character. When the Russo-Turkish war broke out in 1876, the *Times* wished its St. Petersburg correspondent to remain at home. Mr. Dobson, on the other hand, was eager to see the war. The result was he went off to the scene of hostilities, leaving the St. Petersburg post vacant, and the *Times*, in a hurry to fill it up with the first available man, pitched upon Mr. Wallace, whose book on Russia was then beginning to attract attention. At St. Petersburg Mr. Wallace first made the acquaintance of Lord Dufferin, and a strong friendship sprang up between the two. When the latter was removed from Russia to Constantinople the *Times* transferred Mr. Wallace to that quarter also, and he accompanied in due course the Ambassador to Egypt, upon which country he wrote a book, that proved as great a publishing failure as the previous one on Russia had been a success. Had I time for moralising, a pretty sermon might be preached on the vicissitudes of books. The work on Russia made Wallace's career, but had the one on Egypt appeared first the world might have heard no more of the author, who might have succumbed to the failure and joined the ranks of that large body of English writers—"one-book men" Disraeli called them—who publish one book and no more. However, the failure of his work on Egypt did Mr. Wallace no harm in the eyes of Earl Dufferin, who a short time afterwards took him out to India as Private Secretary on being appointed Viceroy. In due course the

author became a knight, and with the retirement of Earl Dufferin to Rome returned to England to resume his literary avocations, the result of which will probably be a book on India next autumn.

Meanwhile, during Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace's stay at St. Petersburg, Mr. Dobson roamed about the theatre of war, and the *Times* being unlucky with the men it specially sent out as correspondents, was only too glad to have, in spite of itself, a vigorous, trained journalist on the spot, conversant with Russia and personally acquainted with Skobeleff and the leading Russian Generals. The operations over, Mr. Dobson returned to St. Petersburg, where he has continued the regular correspondent of the *Times* ever since. If during that period he has not established such a personality for himself in the *Times'* columns as M. de Blowitz at Paris, the fault is due to the *Times* itself, which treats Russia as a sort of European China—a walled-up country outside the pale of civilisation—in whose affairs, except on such special occasions as the assassination of the Tzar, the public of England need have no concern. I have before pointed out that the *Times'* correspondent in Russia has but one allotted function—to be first in reporting the death of the Tzar. So long as he is always on the alert night and day to be first at the death and enable the *Times* to publish the news in advance of any other paper, Mr. Walter and Mr. Buckle care nothing further for news from the Russian Empire. To be always hanging about the Court, collecting news that is never used, is a task similar to the ancient one of rolling stones up a hill, and the *Times* might seriously ask itself whether assigning so much importance to being first with the news of the Tzar's death, and sacrificing all else for it is a game worth the candle. That its Russian news might be of a very different character is shown by Mr. Dobson's new book, which enshrines the admirable letters on the Trancaspian Railway he sent to the *Times* in the spring of 1888.

These lettters were eight in number seven others not being published by the *Times*. Mr. Dobson has recast the whole of them and added fresh matter, bringing the subject entirely up to date. The illustrations, although good, are not so many as he would have liked ; but in this matter an author is necessarily in the hands of his publishers, and the latter regard it purely from the standpoint of pounds, shillings and pence. Authors who have large private fortunes or represent powerful monetary interests naturally have an advantage over those who have not, and it is not to be expected that ordinary writers can endow their books with the wealth of illustrations that render popular such works as the "Cruise of the Sunbeam," the cost of which, large as it was, was probably less to Lady Brassey than many a dinner upon that luxurious yacht. Besides pictures, the book contains several capital maps. One large

one is particularly interesting, for it shows the proposed junction of the Central Asian and Siberian lines. Probably years will elapse before the junction is complete, but when this is the case the railway will possess additional strategical interest owing to Russia being able to direct her Siberian resources against India. Bearing in mind that there is a steady voluntary colonisation of Siberia in progress, as well as an enforced one, and that the home population of Russia is spreading towards the Ural region, the development of the Russian Canada is a factor not to be unduly ignored in Asiatic politics. Fortunately, we ourselves are establishing a counterpoise in Australia that will easily compete with and beat Russia's colonisation of Siberia. Before Russia has ten millions settled in Siberia that number will exist in Australia, and the resources of Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide will be more easily transported to India for defence than those of Tomsk and Tobolsk for offence.

Mr. Dobson's book carries events down to the retirement of Alikhanoff from Merv and the appointment of Kuropatkin to the command of the Transcaspian region. His description of the intrigues of the Russian officials against each other will be read with interest, specially by those men of the world who know how great an influence is exercised in affairs by purely personal considerations, and how litte by such magnificent schemes of policy as the false will of Peter the Great and other bogeys of the Russophobist party. His account of the commercial future of the line is very valuable, and should be carefully weighed by strategists in India, because, since the strength of all armies largely depends upon the character of the local resources of a country, the more those resources are developed the more formidable, the enemy is likely to be. From this point of view the cultivation of cotton at Merv is as menacing to India as the establishment of military posts at Pul-i-Khatun and Penjdeh, because to cultivate the cotton Russia is doubling the culturable area of Merv, and rendering that oasis better fitted to feed and provide transport for a force on its way from Turkistan to India. Points such as these impart particular interest to Mr. Dobson's book, which should be added to everay libray in India.



RUSSIA'S MINISTER OF FINANCE AT MERV.

LONDON, *September 26th, 1890.*

THE Russian Minister of Finance, Vishnegradsky, is making quite a State progress through Central Asia. From every point at which he stops long telegrams come describing his movements, his receptions, dinners, luncheons, toasts and speeches; and the *Daily News* could hardly make more of a political journey of Mr. Gladstone than the telegraphic news agencies of Russia are doing in regard to the Minister of Finance. Vishnegradsky is nothing if not showy, and the internal news agencies of Russia being under State control, the Minister has managed to keep himself pretty well before the public since he left St. Petersburg for the East. The most interesting part of his operations, so far as this country is concerned, is that associated with his visits to Askabad and Merv. At the former place he met Vlasoff, the Russian Consul-General at Meshed, who had been summoned to meet him, and the two participated in the deliberations of a commission sitting under the presidency of General Kouropatkin, for making a railway to Meshed. I have several times already pointed out that the taking in hand of this enterprise is only a question of time. The political and military significance of the line gives it supreme importance in the eyes of Russia, and had the late Governor-General Komaroff been a little more vigorous, the consent of the Emperor would have been secured long ago. Kourapatkin is now forcing it to the front, and it is said that already, before the deliberations of the commission he appointed are complete, the Russian Minister at Teheran has been asked to demand the acquiescence and approval of the Shah. In view of the menacing power in regard to Herat and India, Russia will acquire on the completion of the line to Meshed, it is a pity a little more energy is not shown in pressing on our own railway to Kandahar. Our costly experience with the Bolan railways should surely warn us that it is wiser to construct railways calmly in time of peace than choose wrong routes in a hurry and scamp the work during the feverish excitement of a war scare.

At Merv, Vishnegradsky had to investigate a scandal which is causing the Emperor and his Ministers great annoyance. After the annexation of Merv the Emperor was seized with the whim to own a Central Asian estate, and accordingly a large area of the Upper Merv district was set aside for the Crown, and dubbed "The Tzar's Domain." The area was large, the soil was magnificent, and

the climate was suitable for the growth of the choicest kinds of cotton. One thing alone was lacking—water ; but this, the engineers said, could be remedied by restoring a certain ancient dam and excavating a buried network of canals. To carry out the scheme presented, a large sum of money was assigned, and from time to time the Russian public has been treated to glowing accounts of the remarkable change in the aspect of the Murghab region under the influence of the engineering genius of Gospodin Kozel-Poklesky. The public had at length got to believe that millions of acres had been reclaimed, that Russian Colonies had settled on the banks of the canals, that cotton had begun to sprout like weeds, and that a palace had been reared, overlooking the vast domain, which would be tenanted by the gratified Emperor himself next summer.

It now appears, however, that all these fanciful descriptions of the great irrigated estate, emanating from the clayey banks of the muddy Murghab, had no existence except in the brain of the interested party who invented them. True a palace has been built and the river has been dammed, but the water won't mind the dam, and instead of careering through the canals made for it, prefers to avoid the estate and seek other channels of its own for reaching the sandy desert. Schuylen, in his *Turkistan* relates similar experiences in Central Asia. The natives always manage to construct canals that answer the purpose, and however primitive their methods, their canals achieve their aim. The Russian engineers, on the other hand, with their limitless theory and limited practice, have time after time constructed canal systems in Turkistan which have failed disastrously after swallowing vast sums of money. The costly failure of the attempt to irrigate the Hungary Steppe seems to have been repeated at Merv, but in this case the Emperor happened to be personally interested, so that it did not do to simply evacuate the business and be silent over the failure. Things were in this predicament when some one suggested that it would be wise to call in the aid of foreign skill, and accordingly a request was sent to Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff that he would repair to Merv, and extricate the Government from its difficulty. A telegram from Cairo states that he will leave Egypt for Merv next Tuesday. Bearing in mind how rigorously Englishmen have been excluded from Central Asia until quite recently, and even to a certain extent at the present time, it is rather amusing to find the Russian Government summoning an English engineer to Merv to help them out of a scrape. An Emperor may *ukase* that all foreign skill shall be excluded from the Russian administration, but he cannot prevent Russia having to rely on the foreigner all the same. In its present undeveloped and ill-educated condition Russia cannot dispense with the skill, capital and enterprise of Europe, and by striving to make

her do without them the Emperor has largely blocked the progress of the nation.

The British Consul at St. Petersburg has just issued a report in which he draws attention to a fact on which I have repeatedly insisted in your columns—that Russia is beginning to suffer keenly from her hostile tariff and hatred of the foreigner. The policy of the Minister of Finance may be summed up in a word—to charge as high a price as possible for raw products and make the foreigner come and buy them with gold. The foreigner, on his part, prefers to sell his manufactured goods for Russia's corn and hemp, instead of confining the business to a one-sided transaction settled in gold; and finding Russia a hard customer to deal with, he prefers the more accommodating States of South America and the British colonies. In this manner Russia has encouraged for years the growth of South America and our colonies, and the result is now a solidly established competition against her raw products, outweighing enormously the small progress her industries have made under the influence of the tariff The Consul rightly points out that our merchants now-a-days only buy in Russia when it especially suits their purpose to do so. As a general practice they strive to deal with countries where business is made pleasanter and easier for the foreigner. The example of a healthy and old-established English banking house at St. Petersburg, which a few years ago closed its Russian business and transferred its capital at a stroke to the South American trade, is but one illustration among many of the tendency of the times.

Only a few days ago I was consulted in London with reference to a certain Russian concession. The product was one for which there is a great demand in Russia as well as abroad, and it existed on the property in question in quantities which would have made the future of twenty companies in America. Against it was the drawback that the articles of association of the company had to be approved of by the Russian Government, no persons were to be employed but Russians, and the Russian Government reserved to itself the right to close the operations of the company and sell the concern without the Ambassador of any country having the right to interfere. Conditions of this description are usually enforced in the case of all foreign companies trying to work Russian products and industries, and I need hardly say prove fatal to all enterprise. When a company promoter can form and float a company within a week or two of a vendor arriving in this country from the colonies with a property to sell, he is not going to waste six months waiting while the Russian Government dawdles over the articles of association, and exacts *backshish* for every revision it makes. Moreover, what body of shareholders, however stupid, would like to entrust its

capital wholly in the hand of Russian *employes* under a Government reserving to itself the right to suppress the entire business if ever it chose to do so. It is, thanks to nonsense of this sort, that n t more than one or two Russian companies are brought out in London every year, while as many hundreds are launched to develop the resources of each English colony. Tens of millions sterling that otherwise might cover Russia with railways and provide her with ports for her slow-moving produce now yearly flow to South America to turn the prairies into corn-fields and undersell Russia in every European market.

ANOTHER OBSTACLE REMOVED FROM THE ROAD TO INDIA.

LONDON, *October 16th 1890.*

WHILE the piercing of the range between Quetta and Kandahar has provoked little interest in England, in spite of the great strategical, political and commercial importance of the work, the inaugurating of the Suram Tunnel in Russia has been elevated to the proportions of a national undertaking of the first magnitude. Russia is so flat that the necessity for tunnels hardly exists at home. Hence the people are pleased to own one two miles long—the longest in their Empire. Then it has cost a good deal, being cut out of the solid rock; and they point with pride to having spent a million sterling upon the enterprise. The best mountain borers in Europe have been sought out to pierce the mountain range. The money may have been Russian, but the skill has been foreign. Even the Russian at the head of the Russians has been a Pole. Of the 2,000 workmen and foremen, the bulk are foreign and include representatives from all parts of Europe except England. We built the old Poti-Tiflis line, but we have had nothing to do with the tunnel. Our engineer-contractors no longer cater for Russian business. They do not believe in it. Too much palm oil is required to lubricate the passing of a contract or concession, for our contractors to care to compete with more speculative Germans or French in these days of narrow margins and close prices. They find the open market of the colonies a better field for contracts than the restricted one of Russia. So that no credit for the tunnel belongs to us except that we may have supplied some of the 1,300 barrels of Portland cement used in the undertaking. The Germans, I think, furnished the 170 tons of dynamite. Over 1,300,000 tons of rock and dirt had to be removed from the tunnel before the

piercing was accomplished, and a loop line 7 miles long made to link the tunnel with the existing railway.

Previous to the opening of the tunnel the Transcaucasian railway had to traverse the Lesser Caucasus mountain at a height of 3,025 feet above the level of the sea. This ridge divides in twain the country between Batoum and Baku between the Black Sea and the Caspian. Excluding the ridge the route is easy enough, the railway rising gradually towards the capital, Tiflis, from the two seas. On the Black Sea side the railway takes the course of the river Rion, on the side of the Caspian the river Kura. But between Batoum and Tiflis there is the ridge of the Lesser Caucasus, forming the background of the Black Sea littoral, which has been an obstacle since the opening of the line in 1873. The line starts from Batoum and Poti at 18 feet above the sea level. From Poti the railway for 40 miles traverses a swamp, after which the line rises with gradients from 1 in 125 to 1 in 70, with curves of from 200 to 250 feet. Beyond this the gradients are 1 in 45 and, 1 in 25, and finally the profile changes to 1 in 22¼, landing at the Poni station at the top of the Suram Pass, 3,200 feet above the sea level. After leaving Poni the line goes down a few miles at 1 in 22¼, after which the grades grow slighter, and beyond Gori they are comparatively easy to Tiflis. During the 4 hours' journey from Quirill, on the Rion side, to Michaclova, on that of the Kura, the train rises a height of 2,000 feet. Three engines, one a 60 ton Fairlie, had to be used to haul the trains up to the top and ease them down the other side. Only a few trucks could pass over at a time, and only a few trains a day. The 40 miles of stiff gradients not only blocked the traffic but they cost an extra outlay of £55,000 a year to maintain in order. As this sum was more than sufficient to pay a 5 per cent. interest on a million of capital, I pointed out in my "Region of the Eternal Fire" in 1884 that it would probably serve sooner or later to convince the Government that a tunnel would be cheaper to construct than maintain the existing overhead service. The authorities took this view a year later and began the line in 1886. The Transcaucasian railway is now a tolerably level one throughout. The obstacle of the Lesser Caucasus has been successfully abolished.

Military men who have studied the part the Transcaucasian railway will play in the next Eastern war will not cavil at the importance the Russians ascribe to the line. In the last Turkish war it played a very insignificant part, because it commenced from a blockaded port and joined a sea more or less under Turkish control, with simply the isolated city of Tiflis. It was a mere local branch line, of value only when the sea was open and free. The case is very different now. The line has been extended since 1878 from Tiflis to Baku, and Batoum has been joined to the Black Sea end.

It therefore binds together two great seas, of one of which Russia is sole mistress, and of the other almost so by the growth of her Black Sea fleet of heavy ironclads and the corresponding decay of the Turkish navy. Unless England declared war, Russia would be mistress of the Black Sea in the next European convulsion, and her fleet would effectually prevent any Turkish vessels from entering it And, of course, up to the actual declaration of war there would be nothing to prevent Russia making the fullest use of the Black Sea for transporting her troops and stores to wherever they were wanted for the impending outbreak. This clearly understood, the importance of the Transcaucasian railway, and, of course, of the Suram Tunnel, will be at once apparent. By means of it troops brought from Russia via the Volga, or from Turkestan by the Transcaspian line, would be railed from Baku to Tiflis, for operations in Armenia, or to Batoum for despatch to the European seat of war. In the same way, if the campaign were in Persia, Afghanistan or India troops from Russia would be ferried across the Black Sea and railed from Batoum and Poti to the Caspian. This power would cease the moment the enemy entered the Black Sea and stopped the transport between Odessa and Batoum, but it would be possible to send the bulk of the troops and supplies by the route before the actual declaration of war. Even in peace time the route is used for military purposes. During the last few weeks 8,000 recruits have been sent from Odessa to Batoum to replace a similar number of time-expired men in the army of the Caucasus.

Hence those officers of the Indian Army and the army at home who have occupied themselves with the task of calculating the progress of a Russain army towards Armenia and towards India will now have to recast their calculations. They will have to assign to Russia increased ability for shipping her forces from the Black Sea to the Caspian, and from the Caspian to the Black Sea, and in a few years they may have to recast them again, for by that time the main railway system of Russia promises to be pushed down to Tiflis, or will join the Transcaucasian line at Baku. At present the home net-work ends at Vladikavkaz. Between this and Tiflis lies the Great Caucasus, requiring so many tunnels to pierce that the Government has hesitated to undertake the enterprise. However, the success at Suram seems to have revived the various schemes that have been drawn up for connecting Tiflis with Russia, and in the course of his speech in inaugurating the tunnel, the Minister of Railways expressed the wish of the Government to make use of the skill and talent at present assembled there to commence this great undertaking. The remarks may have been only of an after-dinner character, but they have been construed into a serious expression of policy, and the Tiflis officials are looking forward to the line being early taken in

hand. The accomplishment of the undertaking would join the Transcaucasian railway with the Russian network and further with the European ramification, thereby rendering it possible to go from Calais to the Caspian all the way by railway. But it is too soon to speculate further in this direction, because, before the line can be opened, at least a dozen granite tunnels must be pierced, and an expenditure be incurred of several millions sterling. None the less, the completion of the enterprise, unless it be shelved temporarily for the easier line from Vladikavkaz to Baku, is simply a question of time. Every year England and Russia, between them, level more and more the obstacles between Charing Cross and Calcutta, and the present decade will probably see railway communication established between the two, in spite of the opposition of diplomacy. The force drawing them together is stronger than the force trying to keep them apart.

THE AFGHAN FRONTIER IN BURMA.

LONDON, *October 23rd, 1890.*

I LEARN from a good source at St. Petersburg that the Governor of the Transcaspian territory has gone on a journey to Penjdeh, in order to arrange for the establishment of an extensive military camp in that quarter. Up to now Russia has done little to fortify the new Afghan frontier. Her works have been mainly of a pacific character. This has been owing to two causes : one local and the other imperial. The local cause arose from the indifference of General Komaroff to military matters—although he wore a warlike coat, it did not cover a warlike heart. He was essentially a civil administrator, caring more for the arts of peace than preparations for war. Alikhanoff, his subordinate at Merv, was quite the contrary; but this clever and unscrupulous warrior had excited so much envy in St. Petersburg by his success that his recommendations were not attended to. As regards the imperial cause, the failure of Russian policy in the Balkan peninsula, and the consequent humiliation of Russia before Europe, diverted the eyes of Alexander the Third from Asia to Europe immediately after Russia's diplomatic successes on the Afghan frontier in 1885, and he has not directed his gaze back again since. It was hardly to be expected, however, that things would remain in a state of quiescence after General Kouropatkin was appointed to replace Komaroff. The new Governor is nothing if not a military organizer. His thoughts run only in the direction of war. It is natural, therefore, that he should

exercise his administrative powers to the utmost to prepare for the two problems that confront a Russian General in his position. The occupation in due course of Khorassan, and the next forward movement south east of Penjdeh, either against Afghanistan, or India, or against both. Hence a few days ago, after welcoming his wife and family at Askabad, where they had arrived to join him, he proceeded direct to the Afghan frontier, accompanied by the ablest officers on his staff. Regarding the proportions of the new fortified camp, I have no definite information, but I am assured that the Russian Government means to make good its lodgement in the Khusk valley, and astonish Sir West Ridgeway by the extensive use a good General can make of advantages a feeble and indifferent military diplomatist flung so recklessly away.

The Minister of Finance, Vishnigradsky, has finished his tour in Central Asia and is now on his way home viâ the Caucasus, which has just been visited by the Minister of Railways. The journeys of these two functionaries will no doubt be attended with important results. The development of the Transcaspian and Turkistan provinces depends largely upon the financial assistance afforded by the State. The Minister of Finance has now had an opportunity of examining on the spot the various pending problems, and will be in a position to solve most of them on his return to St. Petersburg. It rests with Vishnigradsky to find funds for extending the Samarkhand line to Tashkend, for constructing the railway to Meshed, for completing the irrigation works at Merv, for giving State aid to the cotton plantations at Merv, Tejend and the Atak, for running steamers on the Oxus, and a number of other similar undertakings. Enterprise of a private character hardly exists in Russian Central Asia. Excluding the ordinary trade carried on by the local Armenian trades people and a few Moscow firms, everything is done by the Government. Not a single public company has been registered in Russia for developing the many resources of the Transcaspian region since the country was annexed. Before Englishmen and Anglo-Indians comment on this they would do well to remember the little we ourselves have done in Biluchistan and Burma since those regions were incorporated with the Indian Empire. Excluding the Quetta Railway, the State has done little to develop the resources of Biluchistan, while private enterprise has done nothing at all. During the last five years we have had thousands of companies registered for doing all manner of things, possible and impossible, in all parts of the earth, however inaccessible, with the exception of Biluchistan, to open up which, I think I can safely state, not a single company has been registered.

Perhaps of Biluchistan it may be said that there is not much in the country to invite opening up. Such an assertion, however, would hardly be based upon facts, for Biluchistan has not yet been sufficiently examined for the world to know what resources it contains. All we know is, in regard to one resource, that it contains a good deal more petroleum than was ever expected, and that outside the present limited sphere of Government operations exist other oil fields awaiting investigation by the drill. But paucity of resources cannot be alleged against Upper Burma. It is notoriously one of the richest mineral countries in the world. Yet although every Continental geographer and geologist is quite aware of this important fact, what has public enterprise done to open up the country since we took it from King Theebaw years ago? The State, unlike in the Transcaspian region, has done practically nothing to develop Burmese resources; while it is a matter of common notoriety that it has absolutely blocked private and public enterprise by unwise regulation and an ill-advised policy of suspense. In saying this I make no indictment against any individual or individuals—if I wished to do so, I think your readers know me sufficiently to feel that their names would be openly nailed on the columns of this newspaper—but I simply draw attention for the first time to a very regretable condition of things prevalent in Burma. In these days of rapid company promotion and swift turning over of investments, men of money in London will not willingly transact business with countries, in which through unwise laws or the want of a clear policy, business is made to dawdle. I pointed out the evil results of this in regard to Russia the other day. From mistaken notion of the duty of a paternal Government the Russian authorities claim a right to revise the articles of association of any foreign company formed to carry on industrial operations within the empire. This means, in effect, the expenditure of a deal of money in "palm oil" to hurry on the revising business, and a delay of six months, perhaps a whole year, before a *modus vivendi* is established between the foreign capitalists and the Russian authorities. Now a man or a corporation, having £10,000 to spend in promoting companies, does not like to be tied to an undertaking for an indefinite space of time, and be compelled as well to shell out heavily in the matter of expenses. Of the two, a mine or industrial undertaking would naturally be preferred in a country where no such regulations or expense exist, and money can be turned quickly over. Speaking generally, four or five American or colonial companies could be easily floated in the time it takes to complete one for Russia. Naturally, therefore, our capitalists prefer to have nothing to do with Russia, and all the industrial schemes brought to London from that country have to go back again rejected, in spite of the unquestionable merits of many of them.

What I have said of Russia applies in a measure to Burma. Instead of inviting a boom by giving a free hand to early pioneers—a practice common enough in the two Americas and our colonies—the authorities have required time to frame regulations, formulate solemn policies, and protect resources useless until undeveloped, and the delays that have been occasioned thereby have been most detrimental to the rapid opening up of Burma. Countries have their tides of fortune as well as individuals. Commerce is always on the look-out for a new boom, and a boom, no matter how good, always stales sooner or later. One might then just as well try and flog the proverbial dead horse as seek to attract copious capital to a country not before the public. A few years ago every investor was mad on Canada. Any kind of Canadian enterprise succeeded on the market, and millions flowed to that country until a reaction set in; and, although it was not followed by a collapse, Canadian investments ceased to be fashionable and command support. Then Australia had a turn, and there was a rage for all manner of Australian mining and land companies until the country was overgorged with capital, and the inevitable prostration succeeded. Afterwards South Africa boomed with a fierceness almost unparalleled, and before it began to wane Brazil and Argentina excited a mania in the breast of the British capitalist. The simultaneous collapse in South Africa and the revolutions in the two other countries have now caused a terrible depression and crisis in London; but the Indian Government is gravely mistaken if it imagines that bureaucratic cotton wool will save Burma from a similar fate in the future. Sooner or later, probably sooner, because it is a new country of infinite possibilities, Burma is sure to boom, and is just as certain in due season afterwards to sicken from over-enterprise as every other country and colony does in its career. It is useless, therefore, to try and prevent over-speculation for fear of the consequence. No Government has ever yet been able to control speculation, save at the price of practical prohibition of business. To attempt it in Burma, therefore, is to seek to mop back the Atlantic. Far better to aid on the boom, because if a reaction succeeds it, the history of capital consoles us by proving that another boom also follows the reaction in due course.

PART II.

PERSIA AND THE BLACK SEA.

PERSIAN PROGRESS AND THE FUTURE. RUSSIAN CONQUEST.



LONDON, *Friday, July 6th, 1888.*

THE opening of the first railway in Persia has provoked in Russia some discussion as to the future of that country. In England the few newspapers that have referred to the event have been inclined to take a roseate view of Persian progress, impelled thereto not only by the opening of the Teheran railway, but the announcement in the *Standard* that the Shah has promulgated a variety of wise decrees for throwing open his dominions of trade. Such a view, however, does not prevail in Russia. The Shah has now been forty years on the throne without doing anything to benefit the country, and his new reforms will probably share the fate of the famous concession made to Baron Reuter many years ago. The imbecility that characterises his rule throughout is reflected even in the railway just opened. The concession for this undertaking was obtained by a group of Belgian and Russian capitalists, at the head of the latter of whom stands the Persian Consul-General at Odessa, Gospodin, Zaitchenro. The initiative is said to have been due to this person, who enjoyed the support of his Government in securing the concession, the Belgians for the most part providing the money and the railway materials for the undertaking. The concession is confined to the two hundred miles of line from the Caspian Sea to Teheran. Negotiations for an extension south to the Persian Gulf are still in progress. When the Syndicate sent in plans for the Resht-Teheran line, it naturally proposed starting from the Caspian and working ahead to the Persian capital. This was obviously the proper way The Shah, however, thought different. He considered that the construction ought to commence at Teheran. Consequently, instead of the railway providing its own transport-power as it advanced from the Caspian, the idiotic spectacle has been witnessed for months past of camels, horses, and asses transporting rails and sleepers two hundred miles over execrable roads to Teheran in order that the Shah's wish might be gratified of seeing the line start

there. Thanks to this, instead of the railway being constructed at about £4,000 a mile, the ten miles recently opened from Teheran to Shah Abdul Azim have cost £10,000, or £100,000 for the first section, the additional expense being for the most part incurred in providing the local transport to convey the rails, &c., to the capital of the Shah. Thus so far from the railway demonstrating that the Shah Nasr-odin has suddenly become a man of progress, it proves him to be as silly an Asiatic potentate as ever he was.

Rumours prevail that the Shah has suspended for the moment any further extension; but credence is not attached to these in Russia, where it is believed that the Russian Minister at Teheran will, if a hitch occurs, exercise successfully his influence to get the line completed to the Caspian Sea as quickly as possible. Russia has a solid interest in the construction of the line. The Belgian rails of the ten miles laid down had to pay duty to the extent of £15,000 in passing through Batoum to Persia. At this rate Russia will levy a nice little toll on the line, unless the rest of the rails be manufactured at her own iron-works. Apart from this gain, Russia expects to control the trade of Teheran, entirely on the completion of the line. To all intents and purposes, it will practically tie the fortunes of Persia to Russia, since Teheran, now isolated, will be linked with the waterway which runs direct from the Persian shore of the Caspian to the new sea canal at St. Petersburg. In this sense the line will not simply be a junction of Teheran and Resht but of the capitals of Persia and Russia. At no distant date the junction will be consummated afresh by the completion of the railway communication between the two Capitals. As I pointed out last week, the extension of the Russian railway system to Patrovsk is simply a question of months; and from Patrovsk a short line of two hundred and twelve miles along the Caspian will complete the system to Baku, where another line of two hundred and thirty-two miles along the Caspian will carry on the locomotive to Resht. Plans for these lines actually exist in the portfolio of Admiral Possiette, the Russian Minister of Ways of Communication, and by the time the Persian railway reaches Resht they will be already in hand On the Transcaspian Railway, Russian foresight showed itself by building in 1883 a large junction station in the wilderness at the point where the Baku line will some day branch off towards Teheran.

So far as the section to Baku is concerned, the demands of the petroleum trade will hurry this on. At present oil intended for South Russia and Austria is sent first to Batoum in hand-cars, pumped there into tank steamers, conveyed to Odessa, pumped there into cisterns and from those cisterns, into railway tank-trucks, which

convey it to its destination. In the journey to Batoum, great delay is experienced in crossing the Suram Pass, over which only six trucks can be hauled at a time. The moment, however, the Russian railway system is extended *viâ* Petrovsk to Baku, it will be possible for tankcars to run straight from the Baku refineries to the towns of South Russia and the depôts on the Austrian and German frontiers. I mentioned this fact last week; but I repeat it now because it shows that, quite apart from political considerations, the demands of commerce will hasten Russia's railway system towards Persia. Petroleum in a larger degree, and Persian politics in a lesser, will force on the line to Baku within a very short time; and afterwards the conditions will be reversed and carry on the locomotive to Resht. Russia's petroleum trade with Persia is already important, and would constitute a considerable portion of the traffic on the line from Baku to Teheran. Besides this, the splendid development of the town of Baku, and the establishment of an annual fair there are not only rendering Baku the bazaar of the Caspian Sea but even of North Persia also. Baku has a population of 60,000 people; Teheran of 100,000. By the time the connecting line between the two places is finished, Baku will probably have quite as large a population as Teheran, perhaps greater, and will wax in importance, as the Persian capital relatively wanes. The effect of this on Russia's influence in North Persia is obvious.

From the Russian point of view, Persia, although treated as an important Asiatic power by most European States, is already nothing more than a mere khanate. It is pointed out—and apparently with justice—that the conquest of Persia would be a far simpler undertaking than the subjugation of Bokhara, Khokand, and Khiva. There would be no long marches to reach the chief objective points: no frightful deserts to traverse. A couple of months would probably settle everything. In effecting the conquest of Turkistan, the Russians had to march 670 miles to get from Orenburg to Kazala, on the Syr Daria, and almost as far again to get to Tashkent. From there they had to march nearly 200 miles to get to Samarkhand, and about 150 more to get from Samarkhand to Bokhara. Finally, there was a march of about 500 miles more, when the Turkistan army took in hand the conquest of Khiva. There would be nothing of the sort in Persia. A simple march of 200 miles from the Caspian would place the Russians in possession of Teheran. A similar march from the Transcaucasian depôts would effect an occupation of Tabreez. A march of less than 150 miles would make General Komaroff master of Meshed, while a mere gunboat force would capture Askabad, 45 miles from the Caspian, and probably also Shahrood, 30 miles further on. These points seized, Russia would completely control North Persia and

the country draining into the Caspian. The tressure—£7,000,000 or £8,000 000 sterling—Nasr-ed-din is reputed to possess at Teheran would repay the cost of the campaign, and, so far as concerns half of Persia, the rule of the feeble Shahs would be at an end. The subjugation of the rest of the country stretching towards the Persian Gulf would be left for a second campaign. Whatever forces the remaining independent portion of Persia might gather at Shiraz or Ispahan, they could do little to dispossess the Russians of Meshed, Teheran and Tabreez, and would probably confine their efforts to holding their own. When Russia had consolidated her position, it would be simple for her to take advantage of an opportune moment to push ahead a fleet to Ispahan and Bushire, and, having completed communications between the Caspian and Persian Gulf, to pacify the rest of the country by degrees.

Such is the impression prevailing among military men in Russia as to the way that Persia could be broken up. I am not alleging that any such plan engages the attention of the Russian Government at the present moment, or that, if the Shah were to die tomorrow a rush would be at once made for Teheran. On the contrary, the conquest of Persia does not seem to be on the carpet for the moment, notwithstanding the ambitious longings of General Komaroff to shift his quarters from Askabad to Meshed. At the same time, it certainly is a fact that Russia looks forward to the period when Persia will be wholly under Russian rule, and whatever can facilitate this by diplomatic means, by frontier action, and by intrigue in Khorassan and elsewhere, will be readily employed by the Russian Government. The growing feeling in Russia that Persia belongs to Russia (in the same way that the English people regard Afghanistan as naturally belonging to India) will explain the annoyance, and even anger, displayed at the appointment of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff as English Minister at Teheran. It is not that Russia believes that he will be able to do any good in ultimately preserving Persia; but the presence of a sharp diplomatist may render Russia's slow-sapping process less easy to carry out. Rightly or wrongly, Russia does not believe that England would ever go to war to save the Shahdom if she made the raid upon Teheran, Tabreez, and Meshed to which I have referred ; and she questions even whether England would fight subsequently to save the Persian Gulf. I think her assumption is correct in regard to the former : and it is a toss-up whether she is not also right with respect to the latter. At any rate, under any circumstances, Persia is obviously now so open to attack and conquest that it is futile to rely upon her ever being a useful ally. Only a few years ago great importance was attached to the Persian alliance. Captain Yate, if I mistake not, wrote an article in the *National Review* after Penjdeh, in which

he sought to prove that Persia might be invoked to save Afghanistan and India—a proposition upon which Sir Charles Dilke very properly heaped ridicule. Persia would have nothing to gain by helping us, and she would only hasten her own downfall by doing so. As I have repeatedly pointed out in my works, there is practically no limit to the enormous forces Russia can pour down the Volga into the Caspian. No army that England, Afghanistan, Persia, and Turkey could march to that great basin over the long stretches of difficult country separating it from the ocean could match there the forces they would find there waiting to receive them. Russia knows this, and it is a question whether the Shah does not know it equally well. It is a pity that the fact is not equally well realised in England, where there is a fondness for resting the defence of India upon rotten reeds. Certainly the Persian alliance in the event of a war with Russia belongs to this category. Even apart from the imbecility of Persian rule and the absence of any well-drilled army, a population of seven millions, scattered over an area three times the size of France, cannot in the nature of things be very formidable against an organized empire of 103 millions. The Persians, it is true, make good soldiers; but if we wish to drill Asiatics, we have a good recruiting-ground in India itself. If we must have allies, far better look after our own colonies and develop them than waste our treasure on rotten States. Australia, with her 4,000,000, and Canada, with her 5,000,000, are each of them more powerful allies than we should ever find in Persia. A force raised in either would be more effectual in stiffening the native defence of India than any force we might raise in the dominions of the Shah. Assuredly everything should be done to delay the Russian conquest of Persia by energetic diplomatic means; but beyond this bearing in mind that the expansion of Russia in the Caspian region is not simply a political one, but a rapid spreading of the Russian population itself, the question cannot but force itself on the mind as to whether, outside diplomacy, every penny spent on Persia for the sake of preserving that decaying country is not money absolutely thrown away. Far better expend it on the development of Australia, whose growing military strength is a far more hopeful factor for the future defence of India than the bit of engineering tomfoolery the Shah has just been perpetrating at Teheran in the name of progress.



RUSSIAN EXPANSION IN THE BLACK SEA.

LONDON, *July 13th, 1888.*

THE opening of the Novorossisk Railway within the last few days is a reminder to England that Russia's progress in the Black Sea is of a material as well as of a naval and military character. Novorossisk is an outward and visible expression of that widespread colonisation of Cis-Caucasia by the Russians which has been in progress for several generations without removing the old belief that the Russians are not a colonising people. In the sense that Russia does not part with her people as we do—that she does not see them quit the mother country in ships for lands beyond the sea—Russia is certainly not a colonising power; but her peasants for generations have been accustomed to march across seas of steppes, forests, or corn-fields, to lands, far removed from the mother province, and with the exception that they have tramped great distances alongside their wagons instead of travelling on board ship, there is no difference between the emigration of English farm labourers to Canada or Australia and that of Russian peasants from Moscow or Penza to the steppe country to the north of the Caucasus range. From the thickly-populated provinces round about Moscow there is a constant radiation of human life. Every season peasants swarm away southward and eastward of that centre, just as emigrants in April and May swarm from England, and many are still on the road, tramping their way onwards, when English labourers who left their homes the same time are settled down in New Zealand. For the most part this emigration is purely spontaneous and voluntary. The State has nothing whatever to do with it. Over and over again of late years books and pamphlets have been published in Russia demanding the general State regulation of colonisation; but the Government has held aloof, and very wisely, if the failure of State colonisation in the Black Sea district of the Caucasus and in the province of the Amoor is a criterion of what comes of the State interfering in these matters. After the annexation of the Amoor province, General Mouravieff Amoorsky induced the Government to send thither 30,000 settlers the bulk of whom perished like flies. After the Crimean war the authorities of the Caucasus settled thousands of people along the Black Sea coast from Anapa to Poti; and these again either died of fever or became paupers under the administrative methods in vogue. What will be the outcome of the new spell of State colonisation of the Pacific provinces, conducted as a counterpoise to the

influx of Chinese into the Usuri district, it is too soon yet to say. For several years now the Russian Government has been sending several thousand people to Vladivostock whence they are despatched to the Chinese frontier to be settled in State-established colonies. This is the only colonisation conducted by the State; and judging by the reports received in Russia of the horrible sanitary condition of the immigrants' barracks at Vladivostock and the red tape method of the officials who are entrusted with the formation of the settlements it is doubtful whether the present spurt will be more successful than Mouravieff-Amoorsky's. The only chance in the colonists' favour is that this time the Government at home is more in earnest about it. The completion of the Canadian-Pacific Railway, and the consequent ability of England and Canada, or even Canada alone, to invade and hold the sparsely, populated Pacific coast of Siberia-created a feeling of uneasiness which, in spite of the despatch of more troops, large armaments, and thousands of peasants, is still far from being allayed. That the seizure of Vladivostock would have the slightest effect upon the issue of a conflict between Russia and England for the supremacy of India is an opinion which, I believe, is only held by Sir Charles Dilke. England might just as well seize Timbuctoo for all the effect it would have upon the fighting in Afghanistan. All the same, the loss of Vladivostock would vex and annoy Russia, even if the occupation were only temporary; and hence to make the task as hard as possible for the invaders, plenty of heavy calibre guns have been sent to the Pacific, and the State-aided emigration will continue until 200,000 souls are deposited on the coast. In the meanwhile the voluntary emigration of peasants from the central provinces to the fertile districts of Cis-Caucasia increases every year, and renders more and more durable Russia's hold upon the Caucasus. The construction of the railway from Rostoff-on-the-Don to Vladikavkaz greatly facilitated the movement, just as the extension of the railway system from Samara, on the Volga, to Orenburg, promoted the colonisation of Trans-Volga Russia. In both cases the railway was constructed mainly for military purposes—that to Vladikavkaz for the purpose of tying the Caucasus to Russia, and the second to Orenburg for facilitating the despatch of troops to Turkistan. In both cases the march of events has deprived the lines of their military importance--in one case completely—while the stream of colonisation has rendered them of the highest commercial value. During my recent stay in Russia I dined with the traffic manager of the Orenburg Railway, and he told me that the influence of the line on the country traversed had been similar to that exercised by railways in the United States or English colonies. Where originally there were vast tracts of unoccupied land, there are now farms and villages which provide the principal items of traffic for the line—corn,

hides, and cattle—while at the Orenburg end of the railway 7,000 or 8,000 peasants are "tipped" every season to spread over the Kirghizsteppes or the southern districts of Siberia. Traffic from Central Asia there is practically none at all now. Troops, and stores, and merchandise make their way to Turkistan *via* the Transcaspian Railway. Orenburg has completely lost its original character as a military depôt, becoming instead, thanks to the railway, a busy manufacturing town, increasing in importance every year. Thus from being a frontier territory, Orenburg is rapidly becoming a home province; and the construction of the railway from the Volga to Ufa will still further promote the settlement of the country by Russians. A similar movement has been observable in Cis-Caucasia. Formerly troops intended for the Transcaucasian provinces were sent by rail to Vladikavkaz, whence they marched to Tiflis and the garrison stations beyond. Now they are despatched to Batoum by steamer and go Tiflis wards by railway, in the direction of Kars, by the fine military road constructed since the war between Batoum and that frontier stronghold. Thus, in a military sense, the Vladikavkaz line has lost much of its military importance, and will not recover it until it is extended to Petrovsk, on the Caspian Sea, when it will become part of the highway between Moscow and Samarkhand. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of peasants have settled down alongside the railway, and it is largely due to the produce they raise on the fertile Stavropol plains that Rostoff-on-the-Don owes its present prosperity. Forty years ago Rostoff was a mere fishing village, containing only a couple of brick houses for the headman and the priest. Now it has a fixed population of 70,000 people, which is doubled during the busy summer months; and it transacts a trade exceeding £7,000,000 a year. This development is largely due to the colonising of the Stavropol country, which has an area larger than that of England, the whole of it fertile. The settlers export annually over half a million tons of corn, most of which finds its way to Russia and abroad, *viâ* Rostoff; and the output increases every year.

It is this large traffic that the new line to Novorossisk will tap. Hitherto all the produce of Cis-Caucasia has had to flow north, to the mouth of the Don, which is shallow all the year round and frozen over for five months out of the twelve. For the future it will take a short cut westward to the warmer, deeper shores of the Black Sea, and will be exported to Europe or Russia from one of the finest ports of the Black Sea, open to shipping all the year round. The line is 172½ miles long, and has cost a million-and-a-half to construct. On it are two of the longest tunnels in Russia—one of them ¾ of a mile long. As the majority of Russian railways possess no tunnels at all, the construction of this particular one is considered

an important engineering work at St. Petersburg. The line starts from the Tikhoretsk station of the Rostoff-Vladikavkaz Railway and runs *viâ* the town of Ekaterinodar. The chief article of export promises to be wheat, and it is expected that, thanks to the shortness of the line and the excellence of the outlet, this part of corn-growing Russia will be able to compete on favourable terms with the wheat trade in India. Certainly it will compete on better terms than the provinces of Middle Russia; and on this account we may expect to see a rapid increase of the colonisation of Cis-Caucasia, a larger export from the region, and the swift development of Novorossisk into a second Odessa.

Both the Minister of Railways and the Governor of the Caucasus, Prince Dondukoff-Korsakoff, attended the opening of the line. On his way to Novorossisk, Admiral Possiette was to be interviewed by a large deputation from the town of Rostoff, which, foreseeing the ruin of the place through the traffic being diverted to the Black Sea direct, has started an agitation in favour of the immediate construction of the railway to Petrovsk, so as to draw through Rostoff the trade of Central Asia. It is a question whether such a measure would be of much avail, for if a line were constructed from Petrovsk, on the Caspian, to the Rostoff-Vladikavkaz Railway, much of the Central Asian traffic would flow to Novorossisk instead of to Rostoff. Still some would make its way to Rostoff; and it is not improbable that the Minister of Railways will use the agitation as a lever to secure the permission of the Tzar to start on the line without delay. At least, such is the impression in Russia. The Petrovsk line would be 163 miles long, and on its completion Russia will possess a railway between the Black Sea and Caspian, north of the Caucasus, parallel with the railway from Batoum to Baku south of it. Quite apart from the new route established by the line between Moscow and Samarkhand, it would immensely strengthen Russia's hold upon the Caucasus, and enable her to pour her Volga resources by a second line into the Black Sea theatre of war.

Upon the construction of the port of Novorossisk the Government is spending £300,000. Barracks are being created for troops, and the place is to be fortified so as to become a midway naval station between Batoum and Sevastopol. As the line traverses the Kouban petroleum region, a large export of oil is expected, and abundance of liquid fuel will be provided for the use of the fleet. It is noteworthy that while wealthy England does not care to spend money on making a port at Dover in spite of the example set by the French at Calais, the Russians are spending money lavishly upon port improvements in the Black Sea. Upwards of £100,000 is being expended on improvements at Odessa, nearly £300,000 upon the

construction of a coal port at Mariopol, in the Sea of Azoff, £300,000 upon Novorossisk, and, finally, £370,000 upon Batoum, making a total of over a million sterling being expended at the present moment on Russia's southern ports. This expenditure is motived mainly by commercial considerations. Everywhere in the south people are settling and trade is growing and even when the projected port improvements are complete, it is expected that they will fall far short of the requirements of commerce. Four years ago there was not an oil tank at Batoum. I have just received from there some large photographs of some of the forty-seven now in position, holding collectively 20 million gallons of oil. Fifteen tank steamers, constantly running and some of them holding 1,000,000 gallons of oil, are insufficient for the growing demand of the trade. Nor is this activity confined to Batoum. From Poti an export of Transcaucasian manganese ore has sprung up, rapidly approaching 100,000 tons a year. Soukhum Kale, twice the scene of a desolating Turkish descent, seems to share this general prosperity. A project is afoot to connect it by a branch line with the Transcaucasian Railway and provide the latter with three outlets instead of two. Soukhum Kale is by no means a bad port, and, with a few improvements, it could be rendered a very serviceable auxiliary to Poti and Batoum. Adding thereto Novorossisk, Russia would have four good outlets for her Caucasus produce. Soukhum Kale, Poti, and Batoum are small ; but Novorossisk will hold in its land-locked bay the most powerful squadron, besides providing ample accommodation for the largest marine Russia is likely to have in the Black Sea for many years to come. Hence the significance attaching to Novorossisk. Thanks to its railway and port, Russia will open up new country to colonisation, acquire a fresh naval station, and be able, in the event of a war wi h Turkey, to pour down to a new point on the Black Sea troops and stores from the Don and Volga region. Novorossisk may not be another nail driven into the coffin of Turkey, as some Russian papers pretend ; but at any rate it is a very significant indication of Russia's material development in the Black Sea.

RUSSIA IN THE BALTIC AND IN THE BLACK SEA.

LONDON, *July 20th, 1888.*

TWO events have occurred this week in many respects more important than the meeting of the Tzar and Kaiser. The new 18-inch ironclad Tchesme has performed a cruise in the Black Sea, intimating to Turkey that Russia is now practically the predominant Power in that quarter; and the German squadron has arrived in fine trim at Cronstadt, reminding the Tzar that Germany is now the predominant naval power in the Baltic. That Germany should have beaten Russia in the north while Russia was intent upon beating Turkey in the south is so interesting that it is curious no newspaper or politician should have called attention to the fact up to now. To many indeed it will come as a surprise that Germany should be a stronger naval power than Russia, for it was only the other day—how swiftly the sixteen years have flown—that Sir Edward Reed was hounding England into a panic over the Peter the Great, at which period the German fleet hardly existed at all; and now Germany is able to blockade Russia in Sveaborg and Cronstadt, and is better fitted to send a fleet to attack England than the Northern rival Sir Edward Reed tried to make us fear so much. These are strong statements to make; but they are easy to support with facts, for in Russia it is no novelty that Germany has been gaining ground of late years, and the decision of the Government last January to spend half a million sterling in constructing a naval station at Libau was motived by the desire in some measure to establish a counterpoise to the preparations of Germany. Without going into elaborate statistics of the relative proportions of the two navies, which would only bore your readers, it may be briefly said that while the German fleet is mainly a new one, that of Russia in the Baltic is almost entirely old. Germany owns twenty-seven ironclads, of which only four were built in the "sixties," while the remainder were constructed after 1887. Russia possesses thirty-one ironclads; but of these thirteen are old-fashioned monitors, built just after the Civil War in America upon Ericson's design, and seven other were built anterior to the Franco-German war, leaving a balance of only eleven ironclads constructed since 1870, as compared with Germany's twenty-three. The eleven of Russia again comprise only five built since 1880, and the strongest of them all, the Peter the Great, goes back to the period of 1872. Thus the eight ironclads Prince

Henry has conducted to Cronstadt really represent a force—although but a squadron of the German fleet— stronger than the whole of the Russian fleet in the Baltic. This is indeed a most important fact, and one not at all pleasant for the Russians to reflect upon. It is a question whether the satisfaction the Tzar otherwise would feel at having in the Black Sea at last an ironclad capable of sinking the whole Turkish fleet is not altogether destroyed by the feeling of humiliation he must experience at seeing Germany in the possession of a squadron able to "bung" him up at Cronstadt.

When Peter the Great secured for Russia a window in Europe he made it a cardinal point of Russia's policy that she should endeavour to become the principal naval power in the Baltic. With that end in view he strongly fortified Cronstadt, and from the very spot where the Tzar and Kaiser are now residing watched with pride the growth of the Russian fleet. The victories of Peter and Catherine over the Swedes, and annexation of Finland by Alexander I., resulted in the realisation of Peter the Great's policy, and throughout the reign of the autocrat Nicholas, Russia's predominance was unquestioned, so far as the Baltic Powers were concerned. "Never let Germany be other than a minor naval power in the Baltic" was the frequently-expressed maxim of Nicholas. The Crimean war temporarily crippled Russia; but even up to the Franco-German conflict her supremacy was unquestioned, and it is only now that Germany, by the demonstration with the eight ironclads at Cronstadt, has plainly intimated to Russia that this predominance no longer belongs to the Tzar.

It would be easy to write a whole book detailing the causes of Russia's loss of naval predominance in the Baltic. Personally the subject is one of deep interest to me, for when I first visited Russia, a lad in 1870, my father's connection with the construction of the Peter the Great and other Government vessels caused me to be thrown among Russian naval officers, and I got to know their views and their traditions as familiarly as I did the forts and the men-of-war at Cronstadt. Speaking generally, up to the period of the Franco-German war the Russian Navy was making sound progress. Then came a reaction against the reforms ushered in by Alexander II., and the period of corruption in the fleet coincided with the growth of the German Navy. Year after year, while Germany was honestly spending her funds on the construction of men-of-war of sound designs, the Admiralty expenditure of Russia was being dissipated by the personal extravagance of the Grand Duke Constantine and the useless hobbies of Admiral Popoff. The reputation this officer enjoyed was entirely due to the puffing of Sir Edward Reed, thanks to which, he attained an

influential position at the Admiralty, and then proceeded to waste millions on round boats, turtle-shaped yachts, and other monstrosities, the mere mention of which provokes exclamations of indignation and rage among Russian naval men to-day. When the Turkish war broke out, the late Emperor, angry at finding his fleet unable to do anything, reduced the annual grant, and the fleet was starved until the present Emperor came to the throne. The Grand Duke Alexis, who replaced his uncle Constantine, had then such a delapidated navy to deal with, that only limited funds could be assigned for the construction of new ships, and it is only now that he is gradually replacing the old ones. In another four or five years Russia will be again a strong naval power, but not so strong as Germany, who is not likely to lose the lead she has already gained.

During the reign of Nicholas, Prussia spent only £120,000 a year on her navy. Germany now spends annually £12,500,000. Then only two or three men-of-war carried the Prussian flag: now the navy comprises twenty-seven ironclads, nine cruiser frigates, eight cruiser corvettes, five other cruisers, five gunboats, five despatch boats, eleven training vessels, and thirty-one others, making one hundred and one vessels altogether, with a tonnage of 182,000 tons, and crews numbering in all 16,581 men. Russia may possess a couple of thousand more seamen under her flag; but she has no mercantile marine to compare with Germany's nor has she such a large number of deep-sea fishermen. On the other hand, Germany is stronger in the torpedo branch, to which she has been paying great attention of late. Germany's navy is cheaper to manage than Russia's, because it is practically situated in one sea; at any rate a man-of-war has simply to steam round a headland to get from the Baltic to the North Sea; and even this disadvantage will disappear with the completion of the North Sea Canal while Russia's navy is split in two by a whole continent, and Baltic vessels must circumnavigate Europe in order to join those in the Black Sea. Then Russia's climate is against the cheap maintenance of an ironclad fleet. Cronstadt and Sveaborg are closed with ice five months out of the twelve, during which the men-of-war have to remain in port in a dismantled condition. The rest of the seven months is mainly spent in equipping the fleet for the summer and pulling it to pieces for the winter. This equipping and dismantling is a heavy expense, while frost plays dire havoc with the machinery. When I was in Russia last winter, I met one of the ablest naval officers of the day, a man who is taking a prominent part in the reconstruction of the fleet, and he told me that after preparing a detailed list of all the ironclads whose engines and boilers were defective, he had found that Russia only had five ironclads capable of going to sea on a cruise.

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It was in order to provide Russia with an open port that the Admiralty decided last winter to fortify Libau and construct a dockyard there. Libau lies close to the German frontier, and will be of great value in offensive operations, at the same time severing Rega, Revel, and other disaffected German towns belonging to Russia from the ports of Germany. It will provide a basis for torpedo boats and gun vessels attacking the rear of a German fleet operating against Sveaborg and Cronstadt. There seems very little doubt that if Russia and Germany should fight within the next few years, the latter Power will blockade the former in the Gulf of Finland, so superior is her naval strength ; and Russian naval officers are quite reconciled to this contingency, seeing no way for the moment of obviating it. With their torpedo boats and gunboats they would make the blockade difficult to maintain ; but, all the same, seeing how long Russia has been a predominant naval power in the Baltic, it would be humiliating for her to be blockaded at all in her own ports instead of controlling the sea and blockading Germany.

So far as can be foreseen at present, Russia has very little chance of reducing the existing disparity between her fleet and that of the German Empire. Russia was a great naval power in times gone by, because she was mistress of all the cheap resources essential for the construction and maintenance of a fleet when men-of-war were built of wood. The moment iron replaced timber the advantages she had enjoyed in the day of Peter the Great, Catherine the Second, and the autocrat Nicholas, were gone ; and it will be years before she can hope to recover them, and then only in the Black Sea. For the construction and maintenance of an ironclad fleet three things are requisite—cheap iron, cheap coal, and skilled labour. Russia possesses none of these essentials in the Baltic zone. She has no coal-beds nearer Cronstadt than in the province of Moscow or the district of Warsaw, and therefore cannot produce cheap iron. Consequently, nearly all the iron and coal used in the Baltic come from abroad, and the engineering industry is as a result so stunted that it is extremely difficult to get skilled labour for the Government dockyards. Quite the reverse is the case with Germany. Her iron and coal industries are of great magnitude, and she possesses plenty of mechanics as well as technical skill of the highest order. These advantages are worth an ironclad or two to Germany every year, and enable her to add to her fleet far more rapidly than Russia.

In the South the case is different. Russia possesses immense deposits of coal in the Denetz region, and these have been so far developed that, thanks to the present output and the heavy duty imposed on the article, the export of two or three million tons of English coal to the Russian ports of the Black Sea every year has

now almost entirely ceased. For some time past Russia has been constructing a port at Mariopol, in the Sea of Azoff, which is connected with the coal-fields by means of a railway; and private firms are placing steam colliers on the Black Sea to run the coal from Mariopol to Odessa and other ports, so that a large supply of cheap coal is practically assured. Immense deposits of iron also exist in Kherson and other provinces bordering on the Black Sea, and these are being rapidly opened up by Cockerill, Lilpop and Rau and other Belgian and German firms. Thanks to these two resources and the development of manufactures of every kind in the south, we may expect to see the engineering industry quickly grow at Sevastopol, Odessa, and elsewhere, and Russia acquire the means of establishing a powerful fleet. In the Black Sea she will experience no competition from Germany, and will be able to easily beat Turkey and Austria in all that appertains to a navy. If Russia finds it hopeless to attempt to compete with Germany in the North she may yield to necessity and consent to become a second-rate Power in the Baltic, throwing her energy chiefly into the Black Sea. I consider some such transfer of activity in the future to be extremely probable.

In the meanwhile the Russians are very much elated at having at last a real ironclad of their own in the Black Sea capable of confronting the whole Turkish fleet. The Russian public generally has never been deceived by the Popoffkas. Although these vessels still figure on the lists of the Black Sea fleet as ironclads, and are supposed to form the nucleus of a squadron at Sevastopol, the Russian public, and for that matter the Russian fleet also, has always regarded them as vagaries of no value, simply kept afloat in default of any other armour-plated vessels to take their place. The Tchesmè at length represents something real, and, according to all accounts, is a thoroughly sound vessel of good design and excellent construction. She belongs to a series of ironclads Russia started building in the Black Sea, some years ago, all of which are rapidly approaching completion. Her displacement is 10,150 tons, length 314 feet, breadth 69 feet, and engines of 11,500 indicated horse-power, working up to 15½ knots. Her armour belt is 18 inches thick, and she carries six 12-inch and seven 6-inch guns. The largest Turkish ironclad is the Mesoodiyeh, built fifteen years ago. She is of 9,000 tons, carries twelve 18-ton guns, and steams at 14 knots. Although a fine vessel, she would have no chance against the Tchesmè, gun for gun and armour for armour, and the Russian ironclad would theoretically be able to beat it and make short work of most of the other vessels of the Turkish fleet. Two more vessels of the Tchesmé class—the Sinope and the Catherine the Second—

will be ready for service soon, as well as several heavy-gun corvettes of the Tchornomoretz type. This progress seems to have alarmed Turkey, who proposes ordering several ironclads abroad ; but this will not re-establish Turkey's superiority, for Russia's naval power in the Black Sea, as I have just pointed out, is beginning to rest, not merely on armoured vessels afloat, but upon well developed abundant supplies of iron, coal, and skilled labour, an advantage which will enable her to beat Turkey as completely as Russia herself has been beaten by Germany in the Baltic. Moreover, while Turkey is decaying, Russia's commerce in the Black Sea is rapidly growing. She is acquiring a large mercantile marine, her ports are growing in size and importance, and the littoral of the Black Sea is becoming populated with a purely Russian element. This development is really more fraught with danger to Turkey than the cruise of the Tchesmè in the Black Sea ; and the counter growth of German power in the Baltic, so far from being a restraint to Russia and therefore a blessing to England, as believers in the panacea of the German alliance would have us believe, is really likely to be the reverse, for the more Russia feels herself hampered by German growth in the Baltic and crushed back into the Gulf of Finland, the more she is likely to strive to push her way out to the Mediterranean through the Bosphorus.

THE TZAR AND THE SHAH AND THE YOMOOD RISING.

LONDON, *August 3rd, 1888.*

PERSIA still continues to occupy a prominent position in Asiatic politics of the moment. The Russians are interesting themselves in a meeting which, it is alleged, is to come off between the Tzar and Shah in the autumn, and in London politicians who feel any concern for Persia are wondering whether the reported rising of the Yomood Turkomans will lead to a Russian occupation of Asterabad. The former event, in all probability, will be realized. According to all accounts, the Tzar has made up his mind to undertake a tour through the southern part of his dominions in a few weeks, and, whether he proceeds to Samarkhand or not, will probably penetrate as for as Tiflis or Baku, in which case pressure will be brought to bear upon the Shah to induce him to pay him a visit. The Tzar's journey has been for some time talked about. When I was at St. Petersburg I met the head

partner of an engineering firm who was busy fitting up some railway carriages for the Government in connection with the trip. Orders, moreover, had been issued, I was assured, for grand military manœuvres to take place in South Russia in the autumn, and for a naval display at Sevastopol. This part of the programme was looked upon as definite. Almost as definite, although not quite so, was a proposed journey from Sevastopol to Batoum, Tiflis, and Baku, and a return to St. Petersburg *viâ* Tsaritzin and Moscow. Excluding Peter the Great's expedition to Baku, this would be the first occasion of a Russian sovereign visiting the Caucasus ; and it was thought that while the trip to Sevastopol would exercise an important influence on Bulgaria and Turkey, the journey to the Caucasus would impress Asia Minor and Persia—above all the latter. Of course the Tzar could hardly vist Baku without the Shah being influenced by his proximity ; and it was assumed that the latter would feel himself bound to go there to meet him, in which case a sort of indirect homage would be paid by Nassr Eddin to the Emperor of Russia. At least, this was the construction that, it was believed, Russia would astutely encourage the people of the Caspian region to put upon the Shah's journey to Baku, and it was rightly assumed that if the Shah would fall into the trap, there would be no difficulty in establishing this construction. Baku is a bit of old Persia, its native population is mainly Persian, and the remains of the ancient Persian fortress of Baku, prominently placed in the centre of the town, remind the visitor of the time when Baku was as much part and parcel of Persia as Meshed or Tabreez. The Shah could hardly pay a visit to Baku without reminding his people of the decadence of Persian power, while, as regards himself personally, the feeling of inferiority he would naturally experience there, where Russia's material progress is significantly illustrated by an extraordinary development of the town, would have the happiest effect upon Russian policy in Persia. These considerations would thoroughly justify the visit of Alexander III. to Baku.

Whether, if he reaches Baku, he will go on to Samarkhand is a different matter. In spite of all manner of rumours of an affirmative character, the probability of such a visit is questioned in high quarters. Yet, it is a fact that last spring the Minister of Crown Domains gave orders for the erection of a small Imperial residence on the Tzar's domain on the Murghab. Why such a building should be constructed in the Turkoman region if the Tzar never intends going there it is difficult to say. Owing to the dread entertained of the Nihilists, the Emperor's movements are always enshrouded in mystery, and it is quite in keeping with the policy pursued since his accession to publish nothing

definite in advance. On the one hand is the construction of the palace at Merv; on the other the allegations of high officials that it would be *infra dig*, for the Emperor to pay a visit to Central Asia. Such a visit, I have heard it repeatedly argued, would be giving too much importance to the petty khanates of Khiva and Bokhara, without sufficiently impressing Afghanistan and India to an extent proportionate with the trouble incurred. As for the Emperor being crowned sovereign of Central Asia, I have always been assured that it is a wild European *canard*, and have myself regarded it as such. Still General Annenkoff has certainly been doing his best to get the Tzar's visit to Samarkhand over his beloved railway brought about; and Alexander III., who is very fond of doing the unexpected, might readily, on reaching Baku, avail himself of the opportunity to pay a visit to Merv, Bokhara, and Samarkhand. In that case, I suppose the Amir of Afghanistan would not feel himself bound to imitate the example of the Shah and cross the Oxus border to pay his compliments to the illustrious visitor.

Of course if the Yomood affair ripened into anything serious, the Shah would probably sulk at Teheran. As yet nothing has been published in the Russian press with regard to the rising, which, by the way, has been expected at St. Petersburg for some time past. The fact is that the frontier arrangement in that quarter is not one that will work and, sooner or later, will have to be altered. The border Tomood Turkomans winter on one side of the frontier, and pass the summer on the other. They are the joint subjects of Russia and Persia. In 1882, when I discussed this condition of things with M. de Giers, I expressed the opinion that this was a very inconvenient arrangement, and must lead to future difficulties; but he treated it lightly, and smilingly said that the "frontier would wear well." It is not wearing very well just now. Only last spring the neighbours of the Yomood Turkomans, the Goklan tribe, rebelled against the Shah's authority, and made such headway that General Komaroff had to send troops from Askabad to pacify them. Now the Yomoods are equally turbulent, and the Persian authorities are powerless to put them down. The importance of Persia in that quarter is no novelty. In Mr. O'Donovan's time the Yomoods did pretty well what they liked in the neighbourhood of Asterabad. It was assumed, however, that once Russia imposed her authority over the Transcaspian region their turbulence would cease. I never shared that view. Nomads, unnaturally repressed by a strong power for a season are almost sure to have their fling on crossing again into a country where authority is practically nil. The very strength of Russia is calculated, by contrast, to cause them to despise the weak officials of Persia. On the one side of the frontier there is rapid

growth; on the other decay and degradation. Moreover, although the Yomoods live half the year on Persian soil, they have been ordered by Russia to regard themselves exclusively as her subjects, in no wise bound to obey the Shah; and this order, confined to the designing local Russian officials to carry out, has very probably exercised an important influence upon the present independent bearing of the tribe. It cannot be too often remembered that all the Transcaspian frontier officials have had their ambition whetted by the success of Alikhanoff. Five years ago he was inferior in rank to the officer who acts as Sheriff of Tchikishlar and keeps the Yomoods in order when on Russian soil He is now Governor of Merv. Why should not somebody at Tchikishlar enjoy similar luck and become Governor of Asterabad? When such thoughts prevail, one cannot expect the Russian frontier officials to encourage tranquility on the Persian side of the border; it is not to their interest to do so. Their career depends on the reverse being the case, and it is by no means certain that the Imperial Government itself regrets the simmering. Russia enjoys a great advantage over England in regard to her Persian policy, from the fact that the wires are pulled by men who know Persia well. M. de Giers, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, was once Russian Minister at Teheran, while his assistant, Councillor Zinovieff, head of the Asiatic Department of the Russian Foreign Office, held the same post for a very long period, and during Skobeleff's Geok Tepe campaign gave that General an amount of energetic diplomatic support, which was gratefully acknowleged in a memorable speech. Neither in London nor at St. Petersburg have we the match of these two officials. Persian affairs in London are managed at the Foreign Office, where there is no one in charge of them having the experience and astuteness of Giers and Zinovieff; while the Embassy *régime* of Sir Robert Morier at St. Petersburg is no better than that of the time of Sir Edward Thornton, when our representatives used to go to the Russian Foreign Office with empty heads and leave it complacently with empty answers. Even if Giers and Zinovieff were not well versed in Persian policy from long residence in Teheran, their natural cleverness and aptitude for hard study would render them a match for the English diplomatic officials who still pester the Russian Foreign Office with foolish, ignorant questions, similar to those that made the Embassy a laughing stock years ago. Attachés and secretaries bothering M. de Giers as to whether there was one or two Sarakhs, although both had been described by Sir Charles Macgregor in his well-known book on Khorassan, and trying to solemnly negotiate with the Russian Minister while labouring under the belief that the widely parted oases of Merv and Akhal formed a single Turkoman district, have still their

counterparts at St. Petersburg. Yet happy-go-lucky ignorance is not confined to them alone. When Sir Charles Dilke wrote the series of articles on European politics in the *Fortnightly Review*, he was still under the impression that the Transcaspian Railway was only a tram line. Locally, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff may do much at Teheran, but elsewhere the Russians have it all their own way.

The influence on trade exercised by the Transcaspian Railway is illustrated by the numerous agents, Russian and foreign, who have made their way thither since the line was opened for traffic. One large Warsaw engineering firm, whose agent has just returned from Meshed, intend opening there a depôt for the sale of Russian ironware and agricultural implements. They have also applied to the Russian and Persian Governments for permission to put down a tramway between Askabad and Meshed. The Russian papers received this morning contain a telegram from Azoun Ada, announcing the arrival there of a shipload of locomotives for the Transcaspian Railway. This increase to the rolling stock will greatly improve the traffic arrangements on the line. In order to popularise the railway in Persia, the Russian Government has published in Persian, the Russian Government has published in Persian a guide to the line, giving an account of it, with numerous maps and illustrations, time tables, and a description of the traffic arrangements. This railway guide, which is being distributed broadcast throughout Northern Persia, is a curious illustration of Russia's energy, and shows that she means to do her best to make the railway a commercial as well as a political success. Latterly a number of Russian peasants have passed along the line with the intention of settling at Merv. Allotments have been found them, but it is not intended to encourage the movement until Colonel Koezel-Poklevsky's irrigation scheme is finished, when the greater part of the new area of fertility will be portioned among Russian peasants. There is also a talk of establishing settlements of time-expired soldiers in the Akhal oasis similar to those in Turkistan.

PETER THE GREAT AND THE PERSIAN GULF.

LONDON, *December 28th, 1888.*

THE squall over Persian affairs is at an end, and the subject has dropped from the Russian and English press as suddenly as it dashed into public prominence. It would be a mistake, however, to regard the political weather in that quarter as set fair for a prolonged period. The Vlasoff incident has practically inaugurated what will for many years now figure in the papers as the Persian Question. Persia has at length entered into the sphere of practical politics so far as Russia is concerned. The pear is ripe for plucking, and Russia can now outstretch her hand to seize the fruit. That she will be restrained by any regard for the susceptibilities of England, I do not for one moment believe. Russia's first concern is for her own interests (one cannot blame her for this selfishness), and those interests are diametrically opposed to those of England. England would like to see the *status quo* maintained in Persia without any cost to herself. That is the policy of the hour, stripped of all cant. She is not prepared to provide administrators, army instructors, or organizers of any kind, nor is she disposed to promote British trade beyond extracting cheap bits of paper of the Karun description from the Shah. I am not sneering at the Karun convention, for it is a valuable privilege to extract from Persia, but it has not cost the English Government a single penny, nor does there seem the slightest likelihood of the English Government spending a single penny to promote English trade by the manipulation of the treaty to England's advantage. Without it is utilized in a proper fashion, it will be useless as a counterpoise against the bolder policy of Russia. Russia is not only ready to exact similar concessions from Persia, but what is infinitely more important, she is ready to promote trade by wise governmental support, knowing full well that the merchants' yard measure can be utilised for political purposes just as easily, and often more efficiently, than the bayonet. Thus ten years in advance, the prediction can be confidently made that unless the *laissez faire* policy of England be replaced by an Elizabethan policy, Persia will go to the dogs, and Russia will enjoy the picking of the bones. To my view she will thoroughly deserve the meal, and if I were a Russian there is no policy I should advocate with greater zeal than the disintegration of Persia in utter defiance of the susceptibilities and interests

of England. I candidly confess that next to the expansion of England, I sympathise most with that of Russia. Perhaps it is because outside England I nowhere feel so much at home as in Russia among the Russian people.

This is why I say that if England does not intend to do anything to improve Persia and protect her from Russia, I cannot, in my heart of hearts, blame Russia for seeking to oust us from it. Certainly I cannot hate her, as Russophobists hate her, or overwhelm her with abuse merely to curry favour with the Conservative pigmies who have replaced the Liberal mannikins at the head of our Empire. To me it is inexpressibly dirty work, for gentlemen to insult a foreign power to keep in office partizan leaders whom they are dissatisfied with in private. I was dining the other day with a certain wellknown Conservative M. P., when one of the company trotted out "Peter the Great's will," with the remark that everybody knew it to be a mere fabrication. He quoted Schuyler in support, and I followed with other authorities, and the bubble was once more pricked and laid "busted" on the table. When we had done, the Conservative M. P., who was obviously clearly convinced that the will was a fraud, and in fact plainly admitted it, said in a serious tone, "Ah, well, it is a capital thing to use on the platform. It always goes down with an audience, and I am afraid I shall be tempted all the same to use it again whenever there is a war scare with Russia." How men of unquestioned capacity and intellect could be content to thus spoon out flapdoodle to the public, for the sake, not of England, but of a mere baker's dozen of men in office, passes my comprehension. But the evil results are obvious enough. Instead of Conservative members of Parliament attempting to master the Persian Question and quietly forcing the Prime Minister to adopt an advantageous attitude, they are satisfied to flutter, when too late, historical scarecrows like Peter the Great's will before an ignorant public, and allow Lord Salisbury to do just as little as he likes in the meantime. This little for the most part consists of fluttering in turn the Karun concession before the public and claiming for it the applause due to some great stroke of statesmanship.

Now, however this imposition may succeed in this country, it has not the slightest effect for good on Russia. It might or might not be sound policy to force Russia into an aggressive attitude by attempting to Englishize the army and adminstration, but it is obviously, sheer folly, if not foolery, to provoke her to action by flapping mere red rags which, while they irritate her and goad her to energetic interference, do absolutely nothing to preserve Persia from decay, or tend to establish English

power in the littoral bordering on the Persian Gulf. The Conservative boasting about the Karun concession have been most mischievous in their effects on Russia, for they have certainly hastened the opening of the Persian Question. On the other hand, can any plain-minded Englishman feel convinced that even if English and Indian traders take advantage of the concession and establish English trade throughout the length and breadth of Persia south of Teheran, a Government which has just abandoned the interest of 10,000 Indian traders at Zanzibar, and persists in floundering at Suakim, would protect for a single moment that trade from the encroachments of Russia? If not, then all value attaching to the convention ends, and the less said about it, as a panacea for Persian decay, the better.

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To me South Persia possesses its chief interest from the fact that as, sooner or later, India must be tied to Europe by a series of railways, at least one ought to be under non-Russian control. If Russia gets down to the Persian Gulf, every railway running between Europe and Asia in the future will be under her control. Thus, the exclusion of Russia from South Persia is a matter of Imperial importance. I might add that it is of first importance also as regards British trade; but this is a consideration that does not weigh so much with myself as it used to do. If merchants and manufacturers are content to play the part of conies and will not be at pains to protect their interests, all I can say is that they deserve to be Cossacked, and merit no mercy when the sacking takes place. In despotic countries the policy of the State depends upon the sovereign and a few officials; in countries possessing representative institutions the policy depends largely upon public opinion. In the former case merchants whose interests are menaced appeal to Ministers; in the latter they have to appeal to the public. No English statesmen now-a-days goes far ahead of public opinion, whether he be Conservative or Liberal, and if public opinion is indifferent, it is useless to expect the policy of our statesmen to be very brisk. Such being the case, it might be thought that mercantile communities, whose interests are seriously menaced by the Russian advance, would take a little trouble to oppose that advance. For instance, British trade with the Persian Gulf amounts to more than a million a year. If Russia managed to get down to Bushire not much of that trade would escape absolute suppression. It might be thought, therefore, that those whose interests are directly concerned in that trade would take the trouble to prevent public opinion in England being too acquiescent in the gradual annexation of Persia to Russia; instead of which not a single merchant, to my knowledge, has yet opened his mouth or put his pen to paper on the subject, and I question whether any

one possessing the means to educate public opinion has received the slightest encouragement to persevere in the policy of urging England to keep back Russia from that quarter. Certainly, I myself have never had a single letter from any merchant interested in Persian trade thanking me for directing public opinion to the commercial dangers involved in the Russian approach to the Persian Gulf, and hence, if English traders on the spot are indifferent, they have no cause for complaint if the public at home are indifferent also.

It is not sufficiently recognised, either at home or in India, that Russia's tendency to push down to the Persian Gulf is likely to be energetically promoted by the present Emperor (who, whatever his faults is no cosmopolitan coney, but an ardent patriot), because it happens to be one of the ideals of Peter the Great. Full justice has never been done, even in Russia, to the marvellous foresight of that great man. The River Volga is the main array of Russian life. It rises within a short distance of the Baltic and, after the longest course in Europe, flows into the Caspian Sea—a sea capable of floating the whole British isles, and still leave room for navigation. Peter the Great accomplished three great acts—he conquered the country between the Volga and the Baltic from the Swedes; he connected the two by a canal system which gave Russia a waterway between St. Petersburg and Persia; and he conquered the whole basin of the Caspian Sea, annexing not only Derbenat and Baku, but also Gilian, Wazanderan, and Asterabad; country ceded back to Persia by Peter II., and now forming part of modern Persia. Starting from the Caspian, Peter the Great rendered it possible for traffic to proceed by water up the Volga, thence by canal to Lake Ladoga, and finally to issue into the Baltic at St. Petersburg. If one bears in mind that in his time water communications bore the same relation to facility of traffic that is now borne by railways, the idea of building the capital of Russia at the European outlet of water communications starting so close to the trade of India as at Asterabad and other Persian cities, must be deemed one of the grandest conceptions of modern times. The English tourist who scampers through Russia, and thinks a few weeks' residence in hotels and railway carriages qualifies him to act as critic of everything Russian, from their method of drinking tea in tumblers to the plans of Peter the Great, commonly regards St. Petersburg as simply an attempt to move Moscow 403 miles nearer Europe. Hence much published balderdash in the shape of astonishment that Peter the Great should have chosen a northern marsh for the capital of the Russian Empire. Such tourists do not realise as they gaze from the summit of St. Isaac's Cathedral upon the delta of the Neva, beyond which opens out a vista of the

Northern navigable waters of Europe, that that delta is practically the delta, not of the tiny Neva, but of the great water that stretches back to the shores of Northern Persia.

Now, Peter the Great, who was an excellent student of ancient history, knew that in olden times the trade of India had penetrated to Europe *via* the Caspian Sea, and had he lived long enough he would have tried to establish trade relations with India, so as to render St Petersburg the European outlet of Indian trade, or would have conquered down to the Persian Gulf, in order to make the Russian capital the European head of communication commencing in the Indian Ocean. These great designs of his have come afresh into favour with the successful expansion of Russia in Trancaspia, and the revival promises to play an important part in promoting Russian aggression in Persia during the next few years. "The Caspian provinces of Asterabad, Wazanderan, and Gilian were once ours—we have a right to demand them back again," Russians are saying to each other. That is an ugly cry to raise because it can only be silenced by the bayonet, and that is a weapon Persia is unable to use, and England cannot well provide for her. Our moral support may save Persia for a time, but it cannot of itself arrest the decay of the country. We might just as well try to strengthen Persia by pouring doses of Hop Bitters into the Persian Gulf, as by merely pouring friendly words into the ear of the Shah. Yet that is our policy for the moment and no other policy will be adopted by Lord Salisbury unless pressure be brought to bear upon him by public opinion. It is a policy that will be as disastrous in Persia as his policy has been in East Africa, and the recent smash up of British trade at Bagamoyo will be repeated some day at Bushire, unless it be reversed in time.

PERSIA STILL TO THE FORE.

LONDON, *March 22nd, 1888.*

MY forecast a few weeks ago that Persia would soon re-appear on the stage of active politics has been borne out by events. According to the *Novosti* and other St. Petersburg newspapers, the return of Prince Dolgorouki to Teheran has been signalised by a number of demands, which indicate pretty clearly Russia's determination to attach Persia to her chariot wheels. The first is the thin edge of the wedge of absolute control over Persian foreign policy, similar to that which we enjoy in the case of the Amir.

This is a demand that Persia shall grant no further concessions, similar to the Karun, without the sanction and approval of Russia. As regards this, foolhardy politicians in this country are advising that we should retort by exacting from the Shah the pledge that he should grant no concession to Russia without our permission also. It would, however, be very dangerous to attempt a retort of this kind. Russia—it is uselss to disguise the fact is more ready to attack Persia than England is ready to defend it; and moreover, as I demonstrated some time ago, she can smother the Shahdom whenever she likes in a couple of weeks. The consciousness that she can crush Northern Persia naturally gives a force to her policy to which we cannot pretend ; and since a diplomatic return thrust might *cause Russia to force Persia into absolute vassaldom*, the best course to pursue is to play a waiting game, and keep off Russia as long as possible by means of dexterous diplomacy, in the hope that events in Europe may later on operate in our favour.

The next serious demand is one we cannot well prevent being complied with. Russia asks for the control of the Bay of Murdab, near Resht, and insists on the early completion of the Teheran Caspian railway. There can be hardly any doubt that this demand masks another Ashurada plot. The railway to the Caspian is already in course of construction, and Russia aims at having the outlet completely under her control. In that case she will dominate the Persian coast of the Caspian, and from Ashurada and from Murdab Bay Russian influence will be pushed inland. If Persia refuse to yield to this demand, Russia could, and probably would, occupy the port without the slightest regard for the feelings of the Shah and England. Russia looks upon the Caspian as altogether a Russian sheet of water to which Persia has no right whatever, and having made good her control to every inch of the water surface, is claiming the right to control the Persian coast as well.

The demand that Persia should construct, without further delay, a *chaussée* from the Askabad frontier to Meshed is simply the revival of a demand that has been vainly pressed upon the Shah for some months past. Doubts are entertained whether he will do more than consent to it, for Nasr-ed-din sees clearly that the construction of the road would lay open the capital of Khorassan to Russian attack, and is naturally very ill-disposed to spend thousands of pounds in facilitating a Russian conquest. If nothing is done to carry out the Russian demand, it is believed that Russia will endeavour to exact permission to run a railway to Meshed. Here, again, England can do nothing to prevent Russia from acting in whatever manner she likes on the Khorassan frontier. The route of the future highway is now being traversed by M. Gospodin Vlasoff, the new Consul-General at Meshed, who arrived at the frontier a few days

ago with a strong Cossack escort to excite feelings of awe, and was received with much solemnity by the Persian officials.

With regard to the final demand that the Shah should decide on his successor during his lifetime, and with as little delay as possible, this is a matter on which England might equally exercise pressure. Nothing is more likely to lead to a Russian occupation of Northern Persia, and for that matter Northern Afghanistan, than any throne dispute after the death of either Shah or Amir, leading to a period of a anarchy. England is more strongly interested than Russia in preventing this apprehended turbulence from occurring, and her diplomacy might advantageously be more *actively employed than it has been in the past in settling in good* time the question of succession in Persia and Afghanistan. Already, it is asserted, the Shah has yielded to some of the demands, and the whole are to be settled before he leaves Teheran for Paris. On this occasion, Nasr-ed-din will probably discover a considerable waning of the attention and respect paid him on the occasion of his last tour. To-day the Shah is no longer the interesting personage he was twenty years ago. A generation which has run the iron horse into Samarkhand is not likely to have much sentiment left for Teheran, and the spectacle of the Shah will neither draw again crowds, as of yore, nor provoke afresh the old enthusiasm among the potentates of Europe. Persia is no longer interesting. It is a country that is looked upon as played out, except by a few writers, such as Mr. Benjamin, whose history of Persia is one of the most interesting volumes of Mr. Fisher Unwin's admirable *Story of the Nations* series. Mr. Benjamin was some time United States Minister to Persia, and at the close of the volume, referring to Russia's aims of aggrandisement, he observes that 'whatever may be the result of the ambition of Russia, enough has been recorded in this volume to indicate the vitality of the Persian race, and to show that even when for a time Persia falls under foreign rule, she has in the character of her people elements that promise to lead her to assert her supremacy under more favourable circumstances." The vitality that Mr. Benjamin refers to, however, is the vitality of the past not of the present. There is nothing in the modern history of the country to warrant the belief that Persia can possibly ward off the encroachments of Russia, or throw off the weight of Russian administration, once it is laid upon her. In a contest of 8,000,000 Persians with 108,000,000 Russians, what hope can the former have of "re-asserting their supremacy" if Russia traverse the country with a network of railways and carry her trade down to the Persian Gulf? Persia threw off the foreign yoke in the past because she really had vitality then, and was conquered by nations that suffered from dry rot. But Russia is as healthy and as hearty

at the core as England herself, while a blight hangs over every province in Persia. Even in our time, Persia has been expunged from the Caspian; she has been deprived of the control of Asterabad Bay and the Transcaspian territory; Merv and Old Sarrakhs have been clipped from her outlying dominions, and she has been compelled to admit Russian agents in the principal towns of Khorassan. Against this there is absolutely no set-off in the shape of improvement and progress, and Russia daily acquires more control over the foreign policy of the country.

The circumstances, therefore, are by no means encouraging for Sir Henry Drummond Wolff; and I am inclined to think we shall hear no more of Lord Salisbury's successes in Persia in the shape of further Karun concessions. To be frank, recent events have so weakened the Government that a strong policy at home or abroad is hardly to be thought of. During the last few weeks, a marked change has come over public feeling at home.

The mass of the public, sick of the Irish question and disgusted with coercion in Ireland, is beginning to gaze in the direction of Home Rule. It is not that John Bull particularly wants to "do justice to Ireland," or that he believes a wide form of local government will satisfy the Irish; but he is tired of coercion and interminable discussion, and is beginning to be disposed to concede anything to get rid of the Irish question and have done with it. This change of feeling is particularly observable in the provincial press and among commercial men; and politicians are already beginning to hedge in sympathy with it. As an indication of the way the wind is blowing, I was informed yesterday, on high authority, that a certain commercial Bill, in which I am interested, would not be brought on this Session, because the Government did not feel disposed to risk the loss of a single vote by legislating against vested interests. Considering that the Bill was a pretty safe sort of Bill, over which it would be difficult to expect any party feeling, such a determination indicates how sensitive the Government is to the defeat at Kennington and the collapse of the *Times'* charges against Mr. Parnell. It is noteworthy that while the nation seems to be changing in its views about granting self-government to Ireland, it is not getting up any steam for the Grand Old Man. The desire seems to be that either the Government should bring in a Bill, or else that Mr. Chamberlain should do so. Mr. Gladstone's name excites no enthusiasm whatever in the matter, and in spite of all the wire-pulling of the Radicals, England seems determined not to entrust any Home Rule measure to him.

The Russian Government has published this week the *Annuaire Diplomatique de l' Empire de Russie* for 1888-89, containing

among other things the Russian documents relating to the settlement of the Afghan frontier, accompanied by a number of maps. The book has not reached me yet; but meanwhile I may note that the *Novœl Vremya* draws from it the conclusion that it bears out the fact that Russia won everything she wanted on the frontier, and that the resistance of the English negotiators vanished before the wise firmness of Russian diplomacy. Therefore, it continues, Russia ought to be always firm in the future, since she may rely, in spite of the bluster of England, upon getting what she wants. Who will contend that this reliance is misplaced so long as English foreign affairs are the sport of party politicians!

There is something in the behaviour of M. de Giers, reported to-day, which might well be laid to heart by English statesmen. Yesterday General Annenkoff delivered a lecture on the Transcaspian railway—an enthusiastic lecture, no doubt, full of allusions to the strategic value of the line, the necessity for the Russian colonisation of Merv, and the expenditure of more Imperial funds to promote the establishment of material power on the Afghan confines. The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs was present, and actually dared to vigorously applaud General Annenkoff in his sentiments! Imagine Colonel Malleson delivering a lecture on the Kandahar railway, and an invitation sent to Lord Salisbury to attend! In the first place, he would be amazed at such a proposition being put to him, "considering the delicate relations existing between England and Russia in regard to Afghanistan and Persia;" and, in the second, if he did attend, he would be frightened to cry, "Hear, hear," even in a whisper, lest it should reach the ear of the Russian Ambassador. Really, the timidity and cant of English statesmen, whether Conservative or Liberal, in matters of this kind, is positively past endurance. General Annenkoff's lecture was precisely of the character of the one I proposed giving the other day; but the Russian Government, so far from preventing its delivery, attended in person and vigorously applauded what was said. In some things, England shows an amazing contempt for Russian opinion; in other things, she displays an amazing timidity. Of the two which was most calculated to give umbrage last autumn to Russia—the delivery of my lecture within closed doors, or the speech by Lord Salisbury himself in the provinces, extolling the Karun concession as a splendid triumph of English diplomacy, and the success of the year of the Conservative Government in regard to foreign affairs. That indiscretion of Lord Salisburys' hastened by years the ripening of the Persian question, and nothing but evil has flowed from it since. In the same way, nothing did more last month for Home Rule than the indiscretion of the Government in regard to Mr. O'Brien. It was not a mistake to put Mr. O'Brien in prison; but it was a mistake to deprive one

of the ablest orators of the House of Commons of his clothes, and a political error of the first magnitude for Mr. Balfour to jeer at the prisoner in his speech over champagne and ten courses to an audience at Dublin at the moment when Mr. O'Brien was known to be lying naked in his cell. It was the feeling of indignation this aroused that led to persons like Mr. George Augustus Sala and Mrs. Lynn Linton joining the Committee of Protest formed in London. Only two methods exist of thoroughly settling the Irish question—Cossacking the country, and the grant of some form of local Government. The simplest would be the Cossacking process, and I could name Russian generals who would dispel all discontent in a decade. But a democratic Government like England will not tolerate Cossacking; and therefore the shortest way to settle the question is to devise some form of Home Rule. That the adoption of this would settle Irish discontent is perhaps a doubtful matter; but it would do one thing—it would take the Irish question out of the House of Commons and transfer it to Dublin, thereby allowing the-at-present-misnamed "Imperial" Parliament to deal with more important and pressing affairs. If the incubus of Ireland were removed from the English Parliament, more time might be given to the settlement of Imperial questions in India, Africa, and the Pacific, and English statesmen, less fretted and worried by contemptible bullies of the Dr. Tanner type, might take up a calmer and more confident attitude towards Russia. M. de Giers certainly had no spectre of Poland behind him when he applauded General Annenkoff the other night.

THE LAMB AND THE BEAR

LONDON, *May 16th, 1889.*

THE Persian lamb has crossed the Transcaucasian frontier, and is on his way to pay his visit to the Russian bear. The reception accorded him at Erivan is reported to-day to have been "splendid" which was to be expected in a town containing so many Persians, and which to a large extent, is still Persian in spite of its Russian veneer. Orders have been issued that everything is to be done to impress the Shah. The receptions everywhere are to be splendid, the parades of massive proportions, and the lions of every place are to be shown off with all the art of ostentatious display for which Russians are famous. But while everything is to be done to make the Shah enjoy himself, and put him on good terms with the Russians, he is none the less to be made to feel that he is the poor guest of a rich and powerful

neighbour, concealing claws of steel beneath a velvet paw. The Persian lamb is to be well fed at the expense of the bear, but he is to leave some of his fleece behind him. What diplomatic business will be transacted at St. Petersburg I am unable to say, not being on verbal terms with the Russian Foreign Office; but it is no secret in official circles at the Russian capital that serious business of some sort is to be discussed, and that he will not leave there for Europe without being made clearly aware of the wishes of Russia and the danger he will incur in not obeying them. Some English papers are of opinion that we can make a stronger impression on the Shah, and neutralise the fears which the threats of Russia cannot but inspire. I do not share that view. We possess a good many sights to impress a foreigner with; but little England alone cannot beat the display of Russia. In the first place, there is the impression caused by the vastness of Russia. It has been my fortune to cross Russia east and west, north and south, several times, and I well appreciate the influence which the vastness of the country, occupying many days to traverse, must exercise on the mind of an Asiatic potentate, subsequently spinning in a couple of hours from Dover to London. If we could make the Shah traverse beforehand the Canadian Pacific Railway, and the line which the Australians have just completed from Brisbane to Adelaide, the vastness of the British Empire would make an impression greater even than that of Russia. But our colonies are afar off. The Shah will see nothing of them, and will not be influenced in passing through their midst as he will be in passing through the Caucasus—that South Africa of Russia—and the Black Sea provinces, which constitute Russia's Australia. As for England, in regard to size, well, if thrown into the Caspain Sea—the sea wrested from the present Shah by Russia—it would readily float on the surface and still leave a wide margin for navigation round about. The vast population and marvellous proportions of London cannot but strike the Shah; but commerce—and above all commerce dependent on a marine that cannot penetrate into the interior of Persia—cannot compare in influence with the effect produced by the military parades of Russia. Had we India nearer, or did we do what I trust will be done some day—maintain a certain proportion of Indian native troops at home—we could beat Russia in variety of uniform, although she would always have the advantage of us in regard to numbers. It is not in our power to put 100,000 regular troops on parade with the facility enjoyed by Russia; nor can we present the foreign visitor at our capital with the masses of stalwart guardsmen—tens of thousands of big brawny men—which Russia can at hers. Moreover, Russia knows how to make the most of her military displays; so that whatever is big seems very much bigger, and whatever is small is kept from looking insignificant. In this country

the art of making an impression is mainly left to snobs and company promoters. It is not cultivated by our military men, who always seem to do their utmost to keep the army out of sight ; and when it is attempted by the Government of the day, it is done in a shabby genteel way, and without those delightful artistic touches which seem to come naturally to the Russian. As for our Court, I hope I shall not wound anyone's *amour propre* by pointing out that the Court of her gracious Majesty is a very poor one-horse affair compared with the Court of the Emperor of all the Russias. The Queen has not the same amount of cash to spend as the Tzar, and, to be frank, she does not by a long way live up to her income. So we are accustomed to a starved Court, and the public are happy at seeing the Queen go about in the style of a prosperous house-keeper. Things, indeed, had come to that pass a year or two ago that London had reconciled itself to seeing Buckingham Palace nearly always empty. A happy revival has taken place since ; but still the Court in this country is not the impressive institution that it is in Russia. There are no swarms of gaily uniformed Court officials, with their attendant swarms of gilt-laced lacqueys : no such splendid balls when the guests assemble by thousands in the Winter Palace ; no gala nights at theatres so large that at a concert given at one of them last week 3,000 musicians occupied the stage, and the guests were treated to unlimited champagne in the spacious corridors. In a word, without going further into details, the Court does not pervade London as it pervades St. Petersburg. Royalty is not so much *en evidence*. There is not that everlasting display in the streets that reminds the Russians that their Tzar is living in splendour in their midst, and keeping Court in every sense of the term. In London there are hundreds of thousands who have no idea what Court life is ; who have never seen Court display even from the outside in the streets ; who have never looked upon a Chamberlain in his glory or a gilded Court lacquey, let alone the Queen herself, and who would feel no deprivation if the Court disappeared entirely from this country. The same cannot be said of the people of St. Petersburg, and the Shah will witness there an amount of pomp and splendour London cannot possibly show him. I hope no one will interpret these remarks as implying contempt for our Court in general. I simply discuss the matter from the point of view of the impression likely to be made on the mind of the Shah. His Iranic Majesty cannot but be more impressed of a stalwart Emperor, dressed as a warrior, surrounded by warriors, and living a warrior's life amidst the armed magnificence of modern military display, than by an old lady who dresses more or less like all other old ladies to be seen in London, and is more often encircled by tweed suits and billycock hats than by soldiers' uniforms. So that as regards vastness, military

power, and Court display, Russia will have the advantage of us in impressing the Shah, and there are no sights we can show him which will make him feel he can afford to disregard Russian threats. We shall amuse him when he comes, no doubt; but we shall be able to show him nothing that will cause him to risk siding with us against his burly neighbour. In one word, we might just as well not spend a penny upon him for all the good we shall derive from his visit. Russia will get her money back in some sort of political concessions. All we can do is to be thankful if they are not too excessive.

The Shah means to enjoy himself in Europe, and is raising money to do so in various ways. I was told yesterday of a certain concession that had been offered to English capitalists—a tobacco monopoly in fact—if they would put down a quarter of a million sterling to enable His Iranic Majesty to enjoy himself in Paris. The monopoly would be a good thing; but the question asked was—What is the value of the Shah's firman? It would be irreverent to Nassr-ed-din if I mentioned the unanimous reply on the part of the commercial men taking part in the discussion.

While British merchants in general hold aloof from Persian trade, those of Germany and Austria take great interest in it. According to news published in the Tiflis papers from Teheran, Herr Kruger, an Austrian merchant, contemplates holding an exhibition of Austrian and German goods at the Shah's capital in the autumn. This activity contrasts strongly with the attitude of English merchants. Up to now, so far as I have been able to ascertain, not a single attempt has been made by any English firm to avail itself of the Karun concession, of which Lord Salisbury spoke so highly as a great commercial privilege a year ago.

"To strengthen Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's hands," a Military Attaché has been appointed to the British mission at Teheran. This is an admirable instance of how not to do it. We might just as well send a military expert to Terra del Fuego to "strengthen the hands" of the Secretary of State for Ireland. It is not the embassies and legations that want strengthening, but the Foreign Office itself. The Military Attaché at Teheran can say nothing to Sir Henry that can render his bearing more confident, for Russia holds the Shah by the nose, and can pinch him into acquiescence whenever she likes. Now, if instead of spending the money on this inutility at Teheran, it had been applied to providing the Foreign Office with a good geographical adviser, British diplomacy in general would have been really strengthened, for of what use is it to send brains to Teheran when the strings of Persian policy are pulled by numskulls at home? Now-a-days Ambassadors are to a large extent simply clerks at the end of a wire, and it

requires real men of genius, like Lord Dufferin and Sir William White, to neutralise the ignorance and poltroonery telegraphed out to them for their guidance by the Gladstones or Salisburys of the hour. We complain of caste exclusiveness in India, but in many matters the administration of England runs in grooves of iron. It having become a matter of custom and routine that the Foreign, Indian, and other offices shall be manned with a permanent staff, entering by an educational test having a very remote relation to their actual duties, and that the higher control of these clerks shall be in the hands of ephemeral Ministers or Secretaries, also for the most part put in power without a special regard for their qualifications for the posts assigned them, it would appear to be a simple affair for any statesman to remedy the obvious evil of this system by appointing from time to time from the public eminent men of approved ability to strengthen his own hands and infuse vital force into the department. But no. Providence has divided our administration into two castes—the clerical caste, fed by the crammming system, and the politician caste, maintained by the House of Commons. The intellect of England lies outside both these castes, and no attempt is made to strengthen them by any assimilating process such as is general in Germany and Russia. This to a large extent explains the weakness of our foreign policy, and it will never be remedied until the masses are sufficiently enlightened to insist that the present system shall be supplemented by some method of providing the public departments with men of fresh ideas and vigorous brains selected from the general public.

Professor Vambéry has left England after a long interview with Lord Salisbury. His visit to Contantinople will probably be fruitful of results, for thanks to European influences and geographical position, the Porte can in time of peace occupy a more independent attitude towards Russia than Persia, and even prove a useful ally in time of war. Beyond ourselves, no European power is interested in the independence of Persia; and no Continental statesman would go out of his way to help us save the Shah. At the same time, thanks to her geographical position in the Caspian region, Russia can overrun the whole of North Persia and stamp out the Iranic administration without our being able to fire a shot at the invaders to save Teheran. With Turkey the case is different. We can send our fleet to Constantinople; and we can despatch thither sufficient Indian troops by sea to render the conflict a desperate one for Russia. Under certain contingencies, the friendly support of Turkey would be of value to this country, and if Vambery can say anything to the Sultan that can put him on better terms than he has been the last few years, he should be encouraged to do so.

I omitted to mention last week a rather amusing incident that occurred at Sir Murdoch Smith's lecture at the Society of Arts. Professor Vambéry uses as a rule massive gold spectacles, varied occasionally by a black-rimmed pince-nez. He had both of these at the lecture, and put on each, alternately, during the progress of the lecture, which, as I said last week, was very dryly delivered and well calculated to promote abstraction. During one of these moments of "mind-wandering," to use the advertising expression of Professor Loisette, Vambéry pushed the spectacles off his nose up to his temples and forgot all about their whereabouts. Shortly afterwards he tried to find them, examining the table and feeling in his pockets. At last he brought out and put on the pince-nez, and wore both for a few minutes. The spectacle was rather comical, and I was not in the least surprised at the sally when I heard a gentleman at my back whisper to a friend in a low tone of sarcasm: "Ah, now Arminius Vambéry can indeed see the Russians advancing upon India!"

THE LAST OF THE SHAHS.

LONDON, *July 5th, 1889.*

THE Shah himself is alone to blame if he is not thoroughly enjoying his trip to England. The weather has been lovely. Since he arrived, the festivies have been of a most delightful character, and enthusiastic crowds have followed his Iranic Majesty wherever he has put in an appearance. It would be superfluous for me to relate what he has seen and what he has done. Abler pens have already done that in the daily press; and I am sure that, if I tried, I could not surpass their charming and graphic descriptions. England herself is delighted at the success of the reception. She has done her best to heartily welcome the Persian potentate, and she feels she has succeeded. Why the Shah is so exceedingly popular it would be difficult to say, except that he represents the mysterious and majestic East. Sydney Smith on one occasion wrote that he had outlived his early impressions: he had only one illusion left—that illusion was the Archbishop of Canterbury. Similarly, as regards the public. I fancy it also has only one thoroughfaced illusion left—that illusion is the East. "It is quite refreshing in these monotonous times of peace and order," said a City man to me yesterday, "to gaze upon a man who can cut off the head of anybody he likes, appropriate anybody's property, and put into his harem anybody's wife or daughter." He was a

company promoter, and he sighed as he thought of what he would do in the hanky-panky line if he were Shah. The street songs that are being sung about the Shah reflect largely the same feeling. The craving for unlimited power—the craving for unlimited cash—the craving for unlimited sensuality—all are represented in these gutter ditties. Nasr-ed-din is popularly looked upon as embodying all the poetry and power of the East. He is the representative of the Arabian Nights, suddenly sprung upon a populace sick of the eternal tranquility of London life. For the religious, who otherwise would regard him as a heathen, he brings consolation and peace, because his ancestors were mentioned in the Bible, and therefore his presence testifies to the genuiness of that sacred book Such at least was the opinion expressed to me by a worthy divine a few days ago, and it evidently afforded him so much joy to reflect that Darwin, Spencer, and Huxley had been knocked into a cocked hat by the Shah of Persia visiting our shores that I had not the heart to let my unholy tongue disturb the cherished illusion. I am not sure that, in the future, sages will not declare it to be true wisdom to live in a state of illusion. Evil comes of knowing too much, as Solomon found to his cost ages ago. To be innocently ignorant is surely better than to be overdone with wisdom, and laying on one's back wailing *vanitas vanita tum*. It is better that society should gush over the Shah's little boy, and seek to fondle him in order to delight the Shah, than to indulge in Zolaesque conjectures, bred of a knowledge of inner Eastern life, as to why the Shah should be so very fond of that pale-faced urchin, and take him with him wherever he goes while leaving his wives at home. So that when I read in the *Pall Mall Gazette* this week an enthusiastic article on the Shah's little boy, by the reverend author of *Music and Morals*, I was amused but not startled. I looked to see what Mr. Stead had to say on the subject; but he also had swallowed what the Shah has thrust on Europe with an effrontery that indicates pretty clearly what he really thinks of European morals. Illusions enfold the little boy as well as his sovereign master, and it is perhaps a matter for congratulation that the prying eyes of our gutter papers have not penetrated the mysteries of Oriental life transplanted to European soil by the Persian monarch.

The political illusion, however, is the one that concerns us most. The Shah has been made a fuss of, not for what he has done, but for what it is hoped he might do on our behalf against Russia in the event of a war. He is looked upon as an ally, hated by Russia because of his friendship for England, and who, unless encouraged by plenty of shouting, might go back to Teheran and become the supporter of the Tzar. Hence on every occasion he has

been urged to reciprocate the spontaneously expressed friendly feeling of the English nation, and throw in his lot with a power who has no aims against his dominions, and who will help him against Russia if he helps us against the common Russian foe. The illusion referred to consists in imagining that the Shah is master of his own fate. It influences not only the press but our statesmen as well. Lord Salisbury, with the rest, has pressed upon him the value of England's friendship, and invited similar confidence in return, as if it were really in the Shah's power to do what he likes with his alliance. That alliance, I have repeatedly shown, is no longer the property of the Shah to give us. The Russian development in the Caspian region has placed an iron grip round his throat, and the Tzar will throttle him the moment he attempts to give undue aid to England. A comparison of the efforts made by Russia and England to please the Shah cannot but recall a couplet of Poushkin's quoted by Skobeleff with significance on a famous occasion:—

"I will buy all," shouted Gold;
"And I will *take* all," answered Steel.

While in Russia, the Shah was for the most part very astutely shown simply the glitter of bayonets: we on our part have placed before him our wealth. Much as he may admire our prosperity, he cannot but reflect that wealth alone cannot save him from Russian steel. Pluck in statesmanship and the power of large battalions are needed, as well as cash, to save Persia from the spoiler. The cash we have; but who can say we possess adequate armed forces, and, what is better than both, a heroic determination on the part of lionhearted statesmen to uphold the honour of the Empire at any cost! To my view, the poltroonery of our statesmen—a poltroonery that is rapidly becoming traditional of both parties of the State—is a worse factor against the saving of Persia than even the circumstance that the Russian Caspian is only 150 miles distant from Teheran, while the English Persian Gulf is situate 800 miles off.

Hence I look upon Nasr-ed-din as the last of the Shahs who will visit our shores independent and free. While events in the Balkan Peninsula are tending again in favour of Russia, it is obviously not sound policy for her to become occupied by a Persian embroglio. On this account the Shah is allowed to run his course on this occasion. But unless Russian developments in the Caspian region undergo a sudden and severe check from a quarter that cannot be for the moment forecasted, the iron pressure of Russian progress upon Persian stagnation and decay must infallibly result at no distant date in the present Shah, or his successor, having to submit to a position of vassaldom in regard to Russia. The salvation of Persia from this hard fate is only possible in a limited degree if

we set ourselves to work at once to convert the Persian Gulf into an English Gulf. It is a fallacy, wrongly urged five hundred times over by the English press this week, to suppose that the future of Persia depends upon the policy of the Shah. It depends solely upon ourselves. It is not for the Shah to do something, but for us to put our shoulder to the wheel. If we persist in our present policy, and do nothing, then the Shah will go to the wall. Nothing can save him from the commercial and political pressure exercised by Russia in the Caspian region, except similar pressure brought to bear by England from the littoral of the Persian Gulf. Now, the evil is that the growth of Russia in the Caspian is not simply a State growth, but is an absolute expansion of the natural and national forces of Russia. The Russian Government has done nothing to promote colonisation to the Caucasus, yet tens of thousands of peasants stream thither every year. The Russian Government has done nothing to promote the petroleum industry beyond instituting a few judicious fiscal regulations ; yet Baku has placed a fleet of steamers on the Caspian, constructed a thousand miles of railway, and given in revenue £800,000 to the Russian exchequer, with the promise of an increasing sum every year. But if natural and national forces have been at work, the Russian Government has not been indolent and inactive. Wherever possible, it has promoted Russian trade and encouraged merchants to penetrate to every part of Northern Persia. Against all this, what can England set ? Simply the scrap of paper on which the Karun concession is written—a scrap fit only for the fire, unless it be followed by suitable measures on the part of British commerce, encouraged and supported by the Government, for establishing our influence in the Persian Gulf region. As to what British commerce will do after the Shah takes his departure, it is perhaps too soon to speak ; but the present indications are not encouraging. With respect to the Government, so far as I can learn, it does not intend to do anything at all. If such be the case, we might just as well have saved ourselves the expense and trouble of entertaining his Persian Majesty.

A clearly expressed determination on the part of the Government to support, frankly and loyally, British trade in the Persian Gulf would probably have an important effect in promoting enterprise in that quarter. There are some parts of the world where British trade did not want fostering at all—in Canada, for instance, in Australia, and in South Africa. Those three colonies have boomed in succession, attracting a vast amount of capital, and trade thrives in each of them without any need of support or encouragement from the State. The case is different with Turkey and Persia. The existence of despotic rulers and non-English institutions renders

it necessary that every assistance should be given to Englishmen venturing on trade in those countries. Once upon a time such help was freely forthcoming, but the fads of the foolish fanatics who followed Adam Smith and the wiser political economist of the early part of the century have lead almost to a withdrawal of support to traders in recent times. The lazy policy *lassez faire*, is now, thank God, pretty well scotched, being confined to a few elderly croakers, and the masses demand that if a Government is set up to rule, rule it shall, and not throw all the burden of government upon the individual. Among the popular cries of the hour, there is no cry that comes clearer from the nation's lips than the one that those who represent the state abroad shall promote to the fullest, British trade, and not allow it to be harassed and crushed by foreign rivals, supported by the whole weight of embassies and consulates. The response to the cry has been up to now more or less a sham ; but the Foreign and Colonial Offices have all the same been quickened into a sensitive apprehension of public feeling, and we may hope for sturdier action as the education of officials grows apace. This is not an age when any institution, however sacred, is tolerated unless it properly fulfils its functions.

To me it is simply marvellous how frankly the press has this week discussed the relations of Royalty with the people. The *Standard*, for instance, lectured the Prince of Wales a few days ago for taking sides in the Pasteur dispute in a manner that twenty years ago would have caused every Conservative to boycott that dull and nagging "daily," Since then the papers have discussed the marriage of the Princess Louise of Wales with the Earl of Fife with an astonishing amount of candour. Conservative vying in frankness with Liberal sheets in telling the Queen that the public want no more marriages with German paupers. Plenty of people have long thought the same thing, and said so in private; but this is the first time the sentiment has been openly expressed as national. The display of feeling bears out what I said the other day, that the time is fast approaching when the anti-foreign sentiment so characteristic of Russia and Germany in recent times, will pervade this country as well, and probably prepare the way for an amalgamation of the interests of the mother-country and the colonies. The deliberate act of the Prince of Wales in turning his back on Germany and giving his daughter to an Earl, who although a subject of the Queen, is in lineage, social position, and wealth quite as fit to be the husband of an English Princess as any German princeling—this seems to me to foreshadow a policy of "England for the English," which will grow in intensity during the next few years, and cause England to seek for strength, not in continental courts and camps, but in the bosom of her own Empire.

When this feeling develops into a settled policy of the State, we shall have England looking for political alliances, not to Germany in Europe and to Persia in Asia, but to Canada and Australia and to South Africa and India. Imperial resources, now neglected by statesmen ignorant of the geography of the Empire they profess to rule will then be organized and put in line against the resources of Germany and Russia, and England will find it wiser to hasten the development of Australia, as the real Asiatic ally of India against Russia, than to persist in pouring gold into the sands of decaying Persia.

HOP BITTERS; OR TINTED WATER.

LONDON, *September 26th, 1889.*

THE long-talked-of Imperial Bank of Persia has been successfully floated this week, and the Sassoons have got back in promotion money the thousands they spent in entertaining his Iranic Majesty at the Empire Theatre. I was assured yesterday that although the £10 shares were issued at £12, the total amount of a million sterling had been subscribed twenty times over. This may be exaggerated, but there is bound to be a gamble in such shares. There was when the Rothschilds brought out the Ruby Mines, and again when Promoter Cottam floated water gas. Everbody remembers how the mob fought for Ruby shares, although they are down very low at present, while the gamblers of the Stock Exchange still chuckle over the boom last season in water gas when the £3 paid on the £5 share was saleable in a few weeks at £24, notwithstanding that plenty of shares can now be had for 70 shillings. In like manner the Persian shares are to be worked up, and will doutless reach £20 or so before they begin to tumble. In the meantime the police raid right and left and drop upon poor little gambling dens, while the big gambling business in stocks and shares goes on unmolested. One of these days, when I am in a tearful mood I will discuss mournfully the evil of speculation. On this occasion I wish to deal with the political aspect of the Persian Bank. The prospectus, which lies before me, I do not intend to discuss. Whatever I might write on the financial aspect of the enterprise would be of very little interest to your readers, who, I imagine, when they read this in three weeks time will hardly be mad for Persian shares, then most likely on the downward path, while by the time the printed letter returns to England it will exercise little influence on investors here. I am not envious of the

gains which the promoters have made. I wish them joy after the many anxieties some of them must have undergone in getting the concession. May the shareholders be equally fortunate. The Bank enjoys control over the principal resources of Persia, and if the Shah keeps his word, and Russia does not interfere, and the directors prove men of enterprise, there ought to be plenty of profit for everybody.

For the moment, what interests me most is to see what action Russia will take in the matter. I do not believe the Russian Government will approve of the concession, and even if there be no press and diplomatic crusade against it I am convinced that every effort will be made at Teheran to stultify the operations of the Bank. If the Shah prove thoroughly loyal, these intrigues may be baffled for a while, but I feel certain that the Bank would not be allowed to acquire power beyond a certain point without those intrigues turning into threats. Repeatedly, during the Shah's visit to England, I insisted that the future of Persia does not depend upon Nasar-ed-din himself, but upon England and Russia. If the Tzar were to-day, to-morrow, or a year hence, to render the concession a dead letter, we could only baffle that decision by going to war. Russian statesmen realise this, even if our English ones don't; and it is for this reason that I have been amused with the credulity of those who imagine that the Bank will infuse new life throughout the Iranic dominions. If Russia freely consents to the exploitation of Persia by English capital, and the Shah proves a wiser ruler in the future than he has been in the past, then the new Bank will be as good as a dose of hop bitters to Persia. Otherwise England will have administered the sick man of Asia nothing more than a spoonful of tinted water.

If the Bank is wise, it will devote its developing operations mainly to the Persian Gulf region. Enterprises there will at least be within succouring reach of the British gunboat, while they will not excite so much irritation to Russia as undertakings in the northern provinces of Azerbijan, Asterabad and Khorassan are sure to do. I am convinced that Russia would not tolerate for one moment any very extensive operations on the part of English capitalists in the provinces sloping down to the Caspian Sea. Russia looks upon those as destined by God and Nature for her enjoyment and control, and she will not allow any attempt to be made to override what she considers to be the decree of Providence in this matter. Any English politician who reads these words will probably say—"Russia has no right to think like this; why should she imagine that the Almighty has destined her to be the future mistress of Persia?" To that question, a pious orthodox Russian would reply with the retort—"What makes you imagine that God has specially marked out and assigned England

to be the mistress of India?" For my part, I always deprecate the invocation of the Diety in these matters. The other day I met a Nonconformist minister, who when after some discussion I had demonstrated that our power of defence in India is weaker than Russia's power of offence, considered he had reversed matters by exclaiming: "Well, after all, God in His merciful providence gave us India to control and civilise, and He, I have no doubt, will raise up help for us in the hour of trouble." To which I replied : "Let us hope so. For my part, while I believe in prayer and powder, I must confess that if bound to make a choice of one of the two, I should prefer the powder."

The feeling that Persia is destined to become part and parcel of the Russian Empire is a growing one at St. Petersburg, and it is foolish to ignore it. All the more reason why we should put our affairs in order in Beluchistan and Afghanistan. Special encouragement ought to be given by the Indian Government to English controlled trade in the latter country. While Russian trade is becoming more and more solidly established on the Afghan confines, nothing whatever is being done by English commerce to fill the vacuum in Afghanistan itself. The obstructive policy of the Indian Government ought to be replaced by one of direct encouragement. The present policy interposes a weak military barrier to Russia, instead of a barrier inflated and strengthened by English capital and commerce. The Ameer does not appear to be the class of ruler to encourage the formation of a chartered company to develop Afghanistan—the anti-English feeling caused by Lord Mayo's timid, vacillating policy, and Earl Lytton's unfortunate and ever-to-be-regretted war, does not seem to have sufficiently died down to allow us to hope for the moment for such a scheme. Judging, however, by the treatment accorded to the English Frontier Mission and to various Englishmen who have visited Kabul since, there would appear to be good grounds for belief that if English officers and English traders were encouraged to put in an appearance in Afghanistan and knock a bit about the country, this feeling would rapidly die away, The tendency is too rife in Indian official circles to treat the man who sells calico shirts and copper pots as the only sound representative of British trade, and to regard the mining prospector, concession hunter, and capitalist as mere excrescences. This is a great pity, for the mining prospector now-a-days is as good a pioneer of trade as the missionary. One has only to look at South Africa to realise the truth of this. The opening up of that grand country has not been done by that "busted" illusion, the British merchant, but by the hunter for mines and concessions. Had the Transvaal been situated in India, I question whether it would have attracted a million sterling of

capital, let alone the 50 millions that have been poured into South Africa the last three years, while instead of the 60,000 Boers being overtopped, by 100,000 English new-comers—thereby solving the Transvaal question in England's favour—official impediments would have restrained the stream to a thousand or two. In Burma, for instance, the local authorities are waiting for the British merchant to put in an appearance and organize the trade of the country in the good old-fashioned manner, by means of powerful firms represented by relays of partners and swarms of active assistants. They might just as well, as wait for the reappearance of Nebuchadnezzar or Julius Cæsar. All enterprise now is passing into the hands of companies and the risks that the grand old merchant adventurer of the Elizabethan period was willing to undertake and participate in himself, are now shared by stay-at-home speculators who put their cash into syndicates and companies. This tendency of the age is clearly shown in the case of the Persian Bank. Baron de Reuter runs out to Persia to get a concession, which is clenched by a feed given to the Shah at the Empire Theatre by the Sassoons. The British Government joins in with a charter and Sir Lepel Griffin takes a place on the board to represent official interests. In the whole affair, from inception to allotment, the British merchant does not appear at all. In an enterprise for developing the trade of Persia by English hands the British merchant is absolutely non-existent ! I do not point out this fact in the plain way I do to disparage the Persian Bank; but to show the authorities of India that if they clear the scales of illusion from their eyes, they will see that if Burma is to be opened up quickly, proper encouragement must be given to concessionists, prospectors and promoters, who have made the Transvaal what it is—a "booming" offshoot of the Empire—and will only consent to do the same in Burma on similar terms.

THE REAWAKENING OF SEVASTOPOL.

LONDON, *November 1st, 1889.*

THE Russians are fond of feeding on the past. They do not hold with the opinion of the Yankee that "Nature has stuck eyes in front of man's face, in order that he might look ahead." Dirges, prayers for the dead, commemorations of past events, jubilees, centenaries and anniversaries of every kind consume a woeful amount of time in Russia. The average Russian spends more time praying for the dead than the average Englishman consumes in praying for the living. Professor Huxley, I believe, would say that there was not a pin to choose between the waste of time of

both; but, at any rate, it is surely better to be enjoying the present and preparing for the future than to unduly concern one's self about the departed. Life is quite dull enough without devoting an hour or two at intervals to doleful dirges to men who died a year, or twenty years, or a generation ago, whatever their rank, fame or virtues. However, the Russians delight in stirring up old matters, just as undertakers' men carouse, though there may be a staring corpse in the hearse, near the public-house door. At present they are having their fill of Sevastopol. The present month and the present year have been an anniversary in some sort of way, of something connected with the siege, and the papers have been full of memories of the invasion. I ought to get down *Kinglake* from the shelves in front of me, to see what the anniversary really is; but I am afraid I am only saying frankly what a good many people think when I confess that I cannot touch the Crimean War without a shudder. Taken as a whole, the war is not one that we can be very much proud of, or look back upon without a feeling of profound melancholy. The awful foolery of those in command, at home and on the spot, outweighs any pleasure that can be derived from reading of the bravery of the troops and the gallantry of the officers. In this respect the Russians have an advantage over us, for they can at least point with pride to Toldeben; whereas all the whitewashing of Lord Raglan by Kinglake has not made that general a favourite, while the name of the mediocrity who succeeded him is clean forgotten. The blunder upon blunder in conducting operations in the Crimea, the atrocious mismanagement of the whole military business at home, the leaving of Sir Fenwick Williams at Kars in the lurch, and the mess the British fleet made of the attack on Cronstadt, for want of gunboats, constitute a whole hogshead of pain, to the pint of pleasure one derives from reading how the Guardsmen fought the Russians with stones at Inkermann and licked them, and how a handful of infantry, posted in line, turned masses of troops into a mob of fugitives by the plucky way they poured a potting fire into them at Alma. Apart from the splendid bravery of our soldiers, and the heroism of the officers who led them, what else have we to be proud of? The military and political strategy of the whole Crimean War makes one raw with vexation that such lions should have been under such asses as "bossed the business" in London and on the spot on that occasion.

Out of sheer disgust at the muddle that was made of the war, many politicians now speak of the invasion of the Crimea as a huge mistake, devoid of any benefit to England. But this is carrying the reaction too far. Had Russia been permitted to annex the Balkan Peninsula in 1834, she would have been a leading Mediterranean Power by now. Scattered and divided as our Empire has

been, and is, it must be regarded as a signal advantage that we have had thirty years breathing time in the East, to establish our rule thoroughly in Canada and Australia, and consolidate our position in India. Every day that we keep Russia out of Turkey, is a day gained to our advantage, for we English increase in numbers, power and wealth, far more rapidly than the Russians, and the longer the conflict of the races is delayed, the better equipped we become for the encounter. The keystone of our policy ought to be steady opposition to Russian expansion at every point in the East, and a vigorous support to the expansion of our own Empire. By opposition, I do not mean the irritating hatred of Russophobia, but the employment of the most skilful diplomacy in Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan, to delay, with a smiling face and charming manner the attempts of Russia to establish her control over the frontier districts of those countries. If we can only manage to keep Russia from the Helmund, the Persian Gulf, and Constantinople for another thirty years, our Empire will be so powerful, that we shall be able to regard with indifference Russia predominant in the Black Sea. Meanwhile, what we have to face is, not merely the growth of the army and navy in South Russia but that material development which, in the long run, overcomes all opposition on the part of the pen and the sword. To believe some papers, the re-awakening of Sevastopol is simply due to a revival of the old ambitious aims of the autocrat Nicholas period. As a matter of fact, it is really the outward and visible sign of the constant and increasing expansion of the population and trade of Russia towards the Black Sea. In one word, Black Sea Russia is the Australia of Russia Proper, and Odessa the Melbourne of the Russian Empire All along the Black Sea littoral, new Russian ports are growing, just as new English ones are growing along the shores of Australia, and with the exception of Sevastopol the growth is as spontaneous in the one case as the other. Even Sevastopol, in its revived and re-awakened form is more the product of corn and colonisation, than of the deep designs and energetic action of ambitious officials. It had already begun to rear its head, thanks to the corn trade, before the Government seriously took in hand the revival of the dockyard a few years ago, and even now the disappearance of the ruins is due more to commerce than to any beneficial action of the authorities. An important change, however, is now impending. The Government has decided to use Sevastopol solely for naval purposes, and commerce is to be relegated to Theodosia, at the other end of the Crimea, as soon as a railway can be extended to that part. One would think there was ample room in Sevastopol Bay for trade and war to grow together; but Russian naval men dislike having the two mixed. They think commerce is apt to grow too fast and get in the way of dockyard

operations, so in spite of the clamour of the Sevastopol merchants, they are doing their best to get Sevastopol Bay set aside solely for naval purposes. The circumstance that Theodosia is a very poor port—hardly to be mentioned in the same breath as Sevastopol—is a matter that troubles them very little. They want a monopoly of the place, and I suppose they will get it. In Russia, when commerce comes into conflict with the interest of the army and navy, it is always commerce that has to go to the wall.

Politicians who deprecate the Crimean War, often speak of it as a blunder that caused Russia in revenge to try to get to India across the deserts of Central Asia. They assume, or they say, that if we had let Russia take Constantinople in 1854, she would not have marched across Turkistan, and been established on the Afghan frontier in the present year of grace. This is mere moonshine, arguing a complete ignorance of the natural expansion of Russia. The relinquishment by England of Constantinople to the Russians would not have put a stop to the mutual raids of the Cossacks and Kirghiz, which provoked the Russian advance in Central Asia after the Crimean War, nor abated that hostility of Bokhara, Khokhand and Khiva towards Russia which led, in process of time, to the conquest of those Khanates, or reprisals for attacks on trade and the capture of Russians as slaves. I am not defending the Russians, or putting the blame on the Turkistanis, when I say this. What I want to insist upon is, that the so-called new movement of Russia against Turkistan after the Crimean War, in revenge for our support of Turkey, was not a new movement at all, nor was its motive one of revenge only. Anyone who refers to Russia's frontier records will find that both some time before that war, when England and Russia were at peace, and during the war itself, the Russians and the Central Asiatics were conducting hostile operations against each other, so that what ensued after the war, was merely the natural continuation of preceding events, and would have occurred whether the Crimea had been invaded or not. Had not the Government undertaken the conquest spontaneously, it would have been forced upon them by the same colonising process which has so often forced the hands of our own *laissez faire* authorities, for during the last twenty years there has been a great influx—an influx perfectly spontaneous and unencouraged by the Government—into the frontier districts previously occupied by the Kirghiz, and had the latter not been conquered before hand by the Government, the nomads would have robbed and murdered the straggling settlers until a war would have been inevitable. In Russia, however, it is the opinion, and I must confess it is an opinion which I consider to be a sound one, that if officials are placed

in office to rule an Empire they ought to look well ahead and properly organize its expansion. Had England's hand-to-mouth Parliament and cold Colonial Office ruled Russia, the Khanates would not have been conquered until the murder of many settlers, and the wailing of colonsits toiling as slaves in Khiva and Turkmenia, had forced on a series of costly and bloody wars like the Zulu, Ashanti, and Soudan campaigns. On the other hand, had England been controlled by the average Russian set of Ministers, Delagoa Bay would have been either seized, or bought for £12,000 when offered us at that price by the Portuguese, the Germans would have never been allowed to spoil the expansion of South Africa by the imposition of a protectorate over Damaraland, Zanzibar and its 10,000 Indian merchants would have been saved from Teutonic clutches, and New Guinea and other Pacific islands would have been all annexed before Europe had begun to scramble for their possession. The average English official doesn't care a button shank for the Empire. He commonly doesn't know where it is, and if a clerk at the Colonial Office, he is generally more ignorant and indifferent than in any other department. The Russian Government, on the other hand, loves to know all about what it rules, and has a horror of unorganized and unenclosed possessions which causes it to spend infinite pains in fixing the frontiers on maps, enclosing the outlying portions by means of cordons, and putting every section under the control and guidance of some responsible official or other. The difference of English and Russian methods is strikingly shown in the case of Beluchistan and Turkmenia.Although we obtained Beluchistan some time before Russia annexed Turkmenia, the Indian Government has not attempted yet to organize the frontier by putting a chain of posts from the Persian Gulf to the Seistan district, and thence viâ the Helmund to Quetta, whereas Russia long ago established a chain from the Caspian to Kham-i-ab, viâ the Atrek, Askabad, Sarakhs, Penjdeh and other points. The fault of England is that she does not concern herself sufficiently about the fences and defences of her Empire. The policy of her rulers is always a haphazard one, and would have ruined her changes of racial rule, but for the energy of the individual in mitigating the unending blunders of the State.

Earl Dufferin, in a charming speech this week, dwelt on the importance of India for England, and repeated what I have frequently insisted on in your columns—that we ought to value India more than we do, because the stability of our Empire largely depends upon its retention. Among other things, he laid stress on the increasing dependence of England on Indian wheat; but he did not point the proper moral so far as Russia is concerned. Formerly, Russia was our granary ; now India is rapidly taking Russia's place. This is

unquestionably a matter for congratulation so far as it concerns England and India, but it is well to remember that Russia is not so very pleased with this arrangement. Years ago, I pointed out in my *Region of the Eternal Fire* that "Corn might cause a war between England and Russia as well as Constantinople." The more Russia loses her corn trade, on which her prosperity largely depends the more embarrassed she tends to become, and if the competition on the part of India were to become in the future particularly keen, she might attempt to expel England from India, simply to put an end to that competition. In the Russian press, I have often seen the argument that England is able to beat Russia in the European market with Indian corn, simply because she extorts it from the *ryot* at starvation prices, and makes an additional profit by forcing, under the guise of Free Trade, her own manufactures on the Indian people, while discouraging them from establishing manufactories of their own. "If we were to work the English out of India and let the natives have Home Rule, the few hungry ryots would eat their wheat instead of exporting it, and Russia would rule the market of Europe again."

Any Anglo-Indian will detect the fallacy of such reasoning, and the misconceptions on which it is based, but ignorance, not knowledge, is the parent of wars; and if Russia ever fights England over India, the struggle will spring from her misconceptions, and not be in the least influenced by the better knowledge possessed by the wiser Anglo-Indian subject of the Queen. My own opinion has always been that we have more to fear from a needy Russia, than from a designing Russia—that, to be plain, a "bust-up" of Russia's corn trade is more to be feared than the Will of Peter the Great. The advice of the "bobby" in the song:—

> "And mind you don't leave your till unlocked,
> When the shop-sneak prowls about"

is very applicable to India. If the trade of India is so enormously valuable as Lord Dufferin makes out, all the more reason we should take proper steps to protect it from a Power that has a perennial tendency to suffer from a want of business. Raw products from all parts of the world are hitting Russia hard and making her trade a poor and unprofitable one. Why should she not aim at getting some of that rich Indian trade on which England has fattened so long?



THE RUSSIANS IN KHORASSAN.

LONDON, *August 21st, 1890.*

ALTHOUGH Central Asia attracts relatively little interest in this country just now, owing to the popularity of Africa, it absorbs to a large extent the attention of Russians. The vast extensions of territory Germany, Italy, England, and France have gained in Africa have not unnaturally excited the cupidity of Russia, who is jealous of other empires expanding while her own stands still. On this account, the Chauvinist section of her press continues to manifest a deep interest in the affairs of Persia as being a country which ardent "expanders" consider ought to fall to Russia at no distant date. One of these apostles of appropriation is now visiting Khorassan, Dr. Elisaeff, an Anglophobe traveller who paid an official visit to the Euphrates Valley two years ago, and is now conducting scientific researches in the Persian territory adjoining the Russian and Afghan frontiers. Writing from Meshed to the *Novœ Vremya*, the Russian traveller dilates on the development of Russian influence in Khorassan, and declares the provinces to be organically part and parcel of Transcaspia while separated from Persia by impassable deserts. This is an exceedingly pretty way of putting the case Formerly Transcaspia was considered by England and Persia to be organically part and parcel of Khorassan, in the same way that Wales is considered a geographical connection of England. Russia, however, argued that Transcaspia was a poor bit of desert, naturally belonging not to the Persian but to the Turkoman zone, and the Liberal party in this country falling into the trap allowed her to occupy it without protest or hindrance. Having secured the Persian Wales the Russians proceed to claim the Persian England, despite the vaster area and population of Khorassan, on the ground that it naturally belongs to the Akhal and Merv oases, and therefore, as masters of those oases, it belongs rather to them than to the Shah. Twenty years ago such a claim would have been treated by serious statesmen as a mere burlesque; but we live in days when English politicians yield to every "squeeze," and if Russia were to demand Khorassan as a set-off against the territorial gains of Germany, England, France and Italy in Africa, it is by no means improbable that Lord Salisbury would surrender it with as much *nonchalance* as he displayed in chucking away Heligoland, the strategical value of which, derided by party hacks in the House of Commons, was exultingly proclaimed by the German Emperor as soon as he was master of the spot.

When the Russians originally established their Consulate at Meshed three years ago, the Persian authorities were strongly opposed to them, and the mullahs excited the fanaticism of the people to such an extent that they could not go about the town without being openly cursed and even pelted with stones. Nowadays they can move about singly without the slightest fear of being molested, thanks to the firmness of the Consul-General, who intimated to the mullahs that murder would be at once avenged by Russia laying Meshed in ruins. The construction of the Transcaspian Railway has had a deal to do with the establishment of better relations between the Russians and the Khorassanis. Instead of the Persians travelling from Meshed to Teheran and back viâ Shahrud, they make a circuit viâ Askabad, the Transcaspian Railway, the Caspian and Resht, the result being a journey of nine or ten days instead of twenty-six. Such a journey, while bringing traffic to the Transcaspian line, serves to make Russia better known in Meshed. During the last two years several thousand Persians have arrived there who have made the journey by the Persian route. Whether Khorassan belongs naturally to the Transcaspian region or not, the Russians are doing their best to tie it commercially to it and detach the province from Persia. It need hardly be said that such a policy is almost sure to be crowned with success, Persia doing nothing to counteract it and England, as usual, being supine.

Dr. Elisaeff points out that communications have improved to such a degree that one can travel from St. Petersburg to Meshed in twelve or fourteen days, and even in ten if speed be used. In other words, St. Petersburg is nearer Meshed than Teheran by sixteen days, if the comparison be made between the direct route between the Russian capital and Meshed and the ordinary Persian route from Meshed to Teheran *viâ* Sharud. One easily understands, therefore, how Russians are gradually coming to regard Khorassan as more within their administrative sphere than within that of Persia. The natives on their part having Askabad so near and Teheran so far are naturally shaping their views to please the stronger. Bad as Russian administration is erroneously thought to be by English people, it is a marvel of justice, equity, skill, and wisdom compared with the rule of Persia. On one side of the Khorassan frontier the authority of Russia, notwithstanding that it may be harshly exercised at times, secures the subject of the Tzar personal security, immunity from pillage, freedom in exercising any form of the Mussulman faith, and subjection to laws of a just and taxation of a trifling character. On the other side, the Persian is at the mercy of as arbitrary a set of plundering imbeciles as ever

escaped incarceration in a lunatic asylum. The result is what might be expected. Hundreds of Persians are settling on Russian territory and becoming Russian subjects ; and even in Meshed people seek, while retaining their local domicile, to become Russian subjects at the Russian Consulate in order that they may be delivered from the misrule and merciless exactions of the Persian officials. Against such a movement, which would take place naturally whether Russia encouraged it or not, we can achieve nothing. The case would be different were we at Herat, because then we could have hoped to manipulate the movement in our direction instead of that of Russia.

Dr. Elisaeff says nothing about the proposed extension of the Transcaspian Railway to Meshed that was talked of a short time ago. Apparently, Russia wants to complete first the line to Tashkent and the section from Mulla Kari to Krasnovodsk. The latter is absolutely essential both from a military and commercial standpoint. At present the Transcaspian Railway, although nearly 1,000 miles long, has no good harbour outlet at all. That of Azoun Ada, now in use, is a mere makeshift. Recently the Russian Government decided to extend the line to the deep-water part of Krosnovodsk, which has always been recognised as the best harbour on the East Caspian coast. The work in connection with this will occupy a year, and when it is finished a fresh impetus will be given to the traffic of the railway. By that time the line to Tashkent will also be finished; and then there will remain no further home extension to hinder the pushing of the railway into various parts of Khorassan.

The well-known negotiater Lessar paid a visit to Meshed on his way to take up his new appointment as Russian Political Agent in Bokhara, and had a long interview with the Persian Governor. Since then he arrived at Bokhara, and has been enthusiastically received by the Russian colony there. At least the telegrams from Bokhara say so, and as Lessar himself has to countersign all press messages from the place the news must be true. It is worthy of note that a day never passes without the Russian newspapers publishing a telegram or two from Askabad, Merv, Tchardjui, or Samarkhand. Evidently the Russian Government desires to keep Central Asia in public view, since it controls the news agencies, and can put what it likes on the wires. No special news has been published of General Kuropatkin's operations since he arrived at his post. Perhaps this is due to the fact that he is making a tour through his province, accompanied by the principal officials. With regard to Turkistan, the exhibition at Tashkent is reported to be a great success. A good many Russians have availed themselves of the opportunity to pay a visit

to Central Asia, a through service of trains and steamers having been established between St. Petersburg and Samarkhand. A club train excursion is also leaving Paris for Samarkhand this month. Probably many English tourists will take part in this trip. A few days ago I noticed in the *Times* an advertisement in which an English lady asked if another lady would join her in a trip to the Transcaspian region by this train. And Lord Salisbury "thought that the Turkoman barrier would last his time!" What moles we put in office to direct the course of our Empire!

RUSSIAN INFLUENCE IN PERSIA.

LONDON, *September 11th, 1890.*

A FRESH agitation has been started by the Russian press on behalf of the promotion of Russian trade in Persia. The newspapers of Moscow and Nijni Novgorod are extremely dissatisfied with the operations of the Imperial Persian Bank, and demand that the Russian diplomatist at Teheran should secure some sort of banking monopoly for Russia as well. The Tiflis *Kavkaz*, while agreeing with the *Moscow Gazette* and *Nijigorodski Listok* that something ought to be done, is by no means in favour of a bank. It views in such an institution a monopoly that may get into the hands of Russian Jews, and patronise foreign trade as well as Russian. Monopolies are not in favour with the Government of the Caucasus just now. The authorities are strongly opposed to granting any privileges to foreigners. The *Kavkaz*, which is owned by the Tiflis authorities and reflects the views of the Government, holds that the Russian Black Steam Navigation Company, primarily founded after the Crimean War to promote the growth of a national marine in the Euxine, has brought about quite the contrary result. Thanks to the heavy subsidy and special privileges it enjoys other firms cannot compete with it, while it has studiously refrained from pushing its operations beyond a certain point. In the Caspian Sea a better state of things has only prevailed since the subsidy to the Caucasus and Mercury Company was reduced to insignificant proportions. Even in the petroleum trade the monopolies created by the Nobel firm and the Paris Rothschilds, above all by the latter, have had a distinctly pernicious effect on the industry. A powerful State-aided Russian bank at Teheran, therefore, would probably harm Russian trade instead of helping it. At any rate, it would look more for business to the merchants and manufacturers of Warsaw (all Germans or Jews) than to the traders of Russia

and the Caucasus. Far better would it be for the Russian Government to look vigorously after the interests of the Armenian merchants of the Caucasus, who form a link between Russia and Persia and flourish wherever they are protected against Persian misgovernment and the privileges enjoyed by foreigners.

It is interesting to take note of these views, because, notwithstanding a little bias here and there, they rest upon a rational basis. The development of the frontier provinces of Russia will do more to secure Persian trade than the establishment of any number of banking monopolies in Persia. The recent hubbub in the City over the cancellation by the Shah of the lottery concesssion granted to the Persian Investment Corporation is a reminder to the British Public that Persia is a rotten State, which no amount of diplomatic rose-water will keep from stinking. To those who are fond of moralising over spent bubbles, I would recommend a reperusal of the grandiloquent speech made by Lord Salisbury on the morrow of the Karun concession. Our Prime Minister extolled it as a triumph of British diplomacy that would inaugurate a splendid era of trade and prosperity in the Persian Gulf. Far be it from me to cavil at the exertions of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff and Lord Salisbury. Our statesmen and politicians do so little that, when they achieve anything at all, it is judicious and generous to admit it. But of what value has been this belauded Karun concession? It has not increased the production of Manchester by a single bale of chintz. What the Shah gave with one hand he stole back with the other. I protested at the time against the false glory ascribed to Lord Salisbury over the treaty. The Te Deums chanted by the Conservative press in honor of their chief were doubly mischievous—they raised expectations of a great expansion of trade with Persia by no means warranted by the terms of the treaty and the unvarnished facts of the case, and they (and this was the worst of the unreasonable incense offered to the Premier) excited the jealousy and emulation of Russia, and caused that country to strive harder to put Persia under her thumb. And while on the one hand no benefit has accrued to England from the opening of the Karun river to foreign trade, Russia on the other hand has been led to concentrate her attention on Persia, and make it a point of honour and interest to tap its trade.

In these efforts she is of course greatly assisted by her closeness to Persia. London is a continent distant from Teheran. Baku and Tiflis on the contrary lie within a few hundred miles. Baku in particular is worth fifty Karun concessions. Practically unknown a few years ago, its development is so prodigious as to remind one of an American city. In 1870 its population was 12,000. In 1879, after the Russo-Turkish War, it was only

15,000. When I was there in 1883, it had swelled to 50,000. At present it is officially stated to be 86,000. This is indeed a remarkable growth. To appreciate its real significance, however, one must remember that Baku is a bit of Old Persia, and that it is a Russo-Persian emporium that Russia is building up on the Russian confines. The Persian and the Armenian merchants of Baku transact a yearly increasing business with Persia. To promote it an Asiatic fair is now held at Baku regularly every year. Somewhat tardily the Russian banks have established branches at Baku, but these have already attracted a considerable Persian business. From the railway depôt of Askabad again the Russian merchants are able to top the trade of Khorassan. By degrees we may expect to see the bulk of the business in the Caspian provinces of Persia transacted by Russian subjects. The extension of the Russian railway system into Persia, only a matter of time, will complete this commercial annexation; and it is difficult to see how any number of Karun concessions or Imperial Persian banks can prevent this natural expansion of Russia taking place.

When the Imperial Bank of Persia was established, it was hoped that it would lead to a rapid opening up of the mineral treasures of the country. Up to the present moment very little prospecting has been done, and it is a question whether it would be possible to place Persian properties on the market just now. The British investor, rash enough when excited, is difficult to coax if he fancies the tenure of the investment to be insecure. Rightly or wrongly the impression unquestionably prevails in the City that the Shah is a capricious despot, whose most solemn oath or seal cannot be depended upon, or his capital coerced by the pressure of our naval guns. If he grants any concession, he greedily wants all the plums; and should he revoke it, the British investor can secure no redress. It is a pity that such an evil impression should prevail, because the Shah was certainly popular when he paid his last visit to this country; but it is certainly the prevalent impression in London, and cannot but injuriously affect the relations of the two countries. If we do not take in hand the development of South Persia, and Russia continues to inflate her influence and trade in North Persia, it is obvious that in the future North Persia must dominate South Persia, and through it Russia becomes established on the Persian Gulf.

It is a distinct advantage for Russia that her Minister of Finance is personally making himself acquainted with the obstacles to Persian trade by a journey through the Caucasus and Transcaspia. Our own Cabinet Ministers are too often quite ignorant of the empire they govern. The present one, in particular, possesses

very few members who have seen any more of the empire than the insignificant province of England itself. On the other hand, the Russian Ministers of War, Marine, Crown, Domains, Education, and Finance have all, within the last few years, visited the Caucasus and Caspian region, while the Minister for Foreign Affairs made its acquaintance some time ago when acting as Minister at Teheran. If our Cabinet knew as much of India and South Africa as Russia's Council of Ministers know of the Caucasus and Caspian region, there would be far fewer mistakes in England's policy. Of late years the Russian Government has adopted the plan of periodically sending Ministers to outlying provinces to settle the local problems on the spot instead of dealing with them at St. Petersburg. Apparently the system works well; and at any rate the Ministers get to know the empire they govern. In the case of our own empire the conditions are different; but would it not be a distinct advantage if the Secretary of State for India paid a visit to India at least once during his term of office? We could certainly spare him from Parliament if he does no more for India there than commonly falls to his lot during the session.



PART III.

EUROPEAN POLITICS.

RUSSIA, GERMANY AND ENGLAND.

* LONDON, *June 22nd, 1888.*

NOW that Germany is ruled by a Russian-hating Kaiser, the enquiry is frequently made as to how he will get on with the German-hating Tzar. The chances of peace between the two countries can hardly be said to have improved by the change of sovereigns at Berlin. Leaving out of the question the alleged personal dislike existing between the Tsar and the Kaiser, the fact of Russia being ruled by a vigorous, obstinate autocrat, determined upon making the whole Russian Empire—and more besides—thoroughly Russian, and of Germany being governed by an energetic, fiery, young Emperor, ultra-Teuton to the last drop of his blood, and resolved on making all the world respect the Fatherland, is not calculated to eliminate the fierce friction existing between the two races. A brief interval will doubtless precede any open display of enmity between the two sovereigns—a quarrel would be unseemly while both Courts were in mourning—but sooner or later the forces at work in Russia will tell on the relations of Tzar and Kaiser; and unless Prince Bismarck can establish some *modus vivendi* between the two races, the peace of Europe seems likely to be broken at no distant date. If the divergence of feeling simply proceeded from the Bulgarian question, some sort of a compromise might be effected; but the discord runs far deeper than this. Rightly or wrongly the Tzar has decided to devote his life to making Russia thoroughly Russian, and to do this the Germans at home and the Germans abroad will go to the wall in a manner that cannot but cut to the quick such a patriotic sovereign as the Emperor William. At present the Russionizing movement is in full force in Russia. It commenced when the venerable grandfather of the present German Emperor was on the throne; it continued unabated during the brief reign of his son, and the accession of a new sovereign has up to now exercised no restraining effect whatever on the movement. If Bismarck settled amicably the Bulgarian question, he would still have to quench the Slavophile ardour of the Tzar in order to allay the irritation between the two races. Can he possibly do this? I do not think he can.

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* As will be seen by the date this was Mr. Marvin's first letter to the MORNING POST.

The quarrel is sometimes spoken of as one more or less sentimental, but such is not a correct view of the case. Russians look back with regret to the times when they patronised Prussia and helped her to hold her own in Europe, and feel keenly the humiliation of having had to submit of late years to play second fiddle to Prince Bismarck. In their opinion, Russia before 1870 was a stronger power than Germany. A word from her would have prevented the dismemberment of France ; and it is now considered a fatal error that Alexander II. should have allowed Germany the solid gain of acquiring Alsace and Lorraine and a huge war indemnity in return for the mere paper benefit of being morally supported in the tearing up of the Black Sea Treaty. During the Turkish War of 1876-78, this international infraction proved of no value to Russia, who had to submit to a blockade; and even now the fleet, although rapidly growing, is still not sufficiently powerful to make the Russians in the least proud of Prince Gortschakoff's exploit. On the other hand, Russia has suffered grievously by the German success of 1870. Thanks to the cash acquired by that success, Germany was able to run new railways to the Russian frontier and build a line of fortresses, not only rendering Germany practically secure against a Russian attack—previously a great card in Russian diplomacy—but able in turn to invade Russia. At the same time a navy was started, and ere long Russia had to submit to the effacement of the policy of the autocrat Nicholas that Russia should be the sole naval power in the Baltic.

These were Germany's State gains of the French conquest. The commercial and financial gains were even more serious. Previous to 1870 Russia was dependent, financially, on London, and English capitalists and merchants were largely concerned in Russian commercial affairs. After the war, Germany, flushed with French gold, turned towards Russia as a lucrative field of investment, and in time Berlin became the caterer for Russian loans. When, by degrees, Russia increased her tariff, Germany, instead of following England's example and retiring from the field, followed the trade across the frontier, and erected hundreds of mills and factories just inside the tariff line and within sight almost of the Fatherland. This policy was eminently successful. Thanks to plenty of capital, technical skill, and the newest plant, the Germans of the Vistula Valley made enormous profits and Warsaw waxed as Moscow waned. So long as Alexander II. was on the throne nothing was said against this ; German capitalists were even invited to extend their operations, and received all manner of privileges from the Court. Local circumstances favoured the movement. During the Polish revolt, Mouravieff had induced the Tzar to decree that no estates coming

into the market should be bought by Poles. The idea was that Russians would buy up these estates, and by degrees Russianize the country. It happens, however, that the Russians dislike Poland as a place of residence. The valley of the Volga and the Black Sea littoral are far more attractive than melancholy Warsaw, with its Germans, its Roman Catholic Poles, and its swarms of filthy Jews. Accordingly, the Russians did not flock into Poland as had been expected, and the Germans instead bought up the land. Profits made out of factories were invested in estates and the German manufacturer, who had introduced hundreds of German hands to run his mill, planted whole colonies of German peasants to bring the land into cultivation. Now and again Moscow grumbled at this invasion, and the success of the swarm of Warsaw manufacturers at the Moscow Exhibition of 1882 increased the ill-feeling. Still nothing was done to stop the movement, and up to the death of the late autocrat all went as merrily as a marriage bell.

Then came the reaction, provoked to a large extent by the Germans themselves. When Alexander III. came to the throne he was avowedly no lover of the Germans, but he began his reign by restraining his feeling against them. This was the short, sunny period of the relations between Russia and Germany. Encouraged by the moral support of Prince Bismarck, Russia made her famous moves upon Merv, Sarakhs, and Penjdeh. Germany, on her part, taking advantage of the embroilment, pushed her annexation in Africa, New Guinea, and the Pacific, and, in the person of Lord Granville, insulted England before all Europe. What would have been the ultimate outcome of the Russo-German understanding had not the revolution in East Roumelia suddenly intervened it is difficult to say. Probably Russia would have pushed on the Hindoo Koosh and Herat and Germany would have succeeded in establishing a colonial possession in South Africa, from the Orange River, on the one side, to St. Lucia Bay on the other, and north again to the Zambesi. We owe it probably to the timely revolution in East Roumelia that our South African Empire was not lost. That revolution, which came upon Russia herself as a surprise, transferred the Tzar's attention from the Afghan frontier to the Balkan Peninsula. Prince Bismarck's hatred of Prince Alexander is doubtless due to his anger at having, by leading the revolt at the last moment, introduced a rift into the Russo-German understanding. Before long the Chancellor had to make a choice between Russia and Austria, the latter two powers having adopted widely divergent policies, and for the moment the Russian understanding had to go to the wall. This is not the place to go into the Bulgarian question; but it may be pointed out that the Tzar was deeply wounded by the ignominious failure of General

Kaulbars, and was exasperated by the threats of the Austro-German press. While he had been allowed a free hand at Penjdeh, he did not mind Germany playing first fiddle in Europe ; but the case was different when Russia had to turn from her Afghan successes to experience humiliation at home. Then his animosity against the Germans broke forth in a torrent, and the Prussian invaders in Poland, as well as the Teuton element in the Baltic Provinces, had a very hard time of it indeed.

Although the split over Bulgaria was the immediate cause of the Russifying crusade, a policy of repression must have come into force sooner or later. No patriotic Tzar could have long tolerated the airs of the Germans. At Rïga, Revel, and other places the local officials could not reply to the letters of the Imperial Government unless they were written in German. If a Russian member of the municipal councils spoke in his native language, the German members insulted him by marching out of the hall. In Poland things were worse. In the new manufacturing towns established by the Germans, the Russian language was excluded, and attempts were made also to maintain intercourse with the Imperial authorities only in the German tongue. What, however, gave point to the German inrush was the stupid braggadocio of several military writers at Berlin, who pointed out how Germany would be able, thanks to the large German population now established in Poland and seething with disaffection at Riga and Revel, to successfully invade not only the Vistula Province but even push on to St. Petersburg and Moscow. These writings produced a strong impression on the Emperor's mind. He has never forgotten them. He resolved—and I certainly think rightly resolved—to put his house in order. The development of foreign industries so close to the frontier that in some places thousands of German workmen crossed and recrossed the border every day was of no special benefit to Russia generally, while it depressed trade at St. Petersburg and Moscow. The ukase therefore went forth to Russianize Poland afresh. The Germans, who had bought up one-eleventh of the area of the Vistula Province, were informed that only Russian subjects could hold lands. Workmen and peasants again were ordered to return to Germany at once, unless they took the oath to the Tzar, and in all the towns Russians were put in office and Russ was ordered to be taught in schools. How sharp was the pressure applied may be gathered from the fact that in a few weeks 25,000 Germans asked to become Russian subjects, and land in many places fell to half its value.

Then followed reprisals at Berlin. The German bankers, who had suffered severely by the new measures in Poland, made an onslaught on Russian credit and a tumble took place in Russian

stocks. Russian trade suffered greatly by the conflict; but it is a question whether the losses of Germany, who had become far too large a creditor of Russia, were not even greater still. The Tzar, exasperated by the financial crusade of Prince Bismarck, acted still more harshly towards the Baltic Germans. Russian was made compulsory in all the schools, although the majority of the teachers and scholars knew only German; it was made obligatory in all official local correspondence, debates &c., the distribution of the Bible in German was forbidden; and, finally, all the Lutheran pastors were informed that, after the close of the year, they would have to conduct their services in Russian, read out of Russian Bibles, and preach in the Russian language. While I was at St. Petersburg last winter, thirty-four pastors were arrested in one week for signing a protest against this decree, and batches were exiled without trial to Astrakan and Archangel.

Simultaneously with these measures troops were drafted into Poland to protect it against invasion, and this movement is still in progress. Without discussing in detail the semi-official controversies between Russia and Germany last autumn, it may be said that the Russian Government was convinced that the frontier was in danger, and that this was the chief motive for massing troops in the Polish wedge. Now that Warsaw is considered safe once more, that presence of so many troops, above all masses of cavalry, in the Vistula district is intended to give permanent weight to Russian diplomacy and counterbalance the more rapid mobilizing power of Germany, the intention being, the moment war is declared, to hurl powerful bodies of horse across the frontier and upset the machinery of mobilization by raiding hither and thither, cutting the wires, blowing up the railways, and in a word, doing sufficient damage to prevent an invasion of Russia before Russia's own mobilization is complete.

Such, then, very briefly and inadequately, is a sketch of the relations of the two powers. Under the reign of Alexander II. to be a German was a passport to office. Under the present Tzar it is considered a disadvantage for any one to have a German name. How the accession to the Kaisership of an ultra Teuton sovereign, as determined to protect German interests as the Tzar to defend Russian, can possibly be thought to improve matters passes my comprehension. In all likelihood the persecution of the German Lutherans in the Baltic Provinces will not be suspended, for the Tzar is surrounded by religious fanatics, while one cannot see why Russia should encourage the growth of a hostile Germany in Poland, above all at a period when Germany is expelling 30,000 Slavs from Posen and replacing them with Teutons. The chances consequently are in favour of a continuance

of the Russianzing policy; and this means, in turn, a continuance of the bitter feeling between the two countries. However, from an English point of view, this is not an unmixed evil. Bearing in mind what took place on the last occasion when Russia and Germany were friends, anything which keeps them at loggerheads preserves England from a repetition of Penjdeh and Angra Pequena. For my part I have never been able to gather that Germany would stir her little finger to prevent Russia attacking India, and on this account have always attached a very limited value to the German alliance. If Russia were able to withdraw herself from the present European complications, we should soon hear of serious movements on the Afghan frontier; and if Germany felt herself as strong and as unfettered again as she did four or five years ago, the upset she gave us at Zanzibar would be rapidly repeated elsewhere. Altogether, therefore, the actual condition of Europe is beneficial to English interests, and I do not see what gain would be derived by our attempting to alter it. Russia is not likely to attack Constantinople and Berlin at the same time; and whatever might be the policy of England in the former case, I for one would strongly advocate a policy of non-intervention in the latter. Any widespread conflict in Europe would probably end in a general mauling of the powers all round, and lead to no decisive results to any one of them. That would not be disadvantageous to England if she kept aloof, since the weakening of the powers having interests opposed to her own would give her breathing time to consolidate her scattered Empire and put her Indian defences in proper order.

AN ANGLO-GERMAN ALLIANCE AGAINST RUSSIA IMPOSSIBLE.

LONDON, *October 18th, 1888.*

THE Teutonic outcry against Sir Morell Mackenzie's book this week and the visit of the Kaiser to Rome have concentrated public attention afresh on the position of Germany in regard to European politics. Owing to the successive illnesses and deaths of two Emperors, and the domestic disclosures that have alternated with visits to Russia, Austria, and Italy in keeping Germany constantly to the front in European politics, the public in this country have recently undergone a liberal education in German sentiments, aims, intentions, and aspirations. What the ultimate effect of this will be remains to be seen, but certainly for the moment the glamour

is off the much-vaunted German alliance against Russia that was so popular a year ago, and Prince Bismarck will have to adopt more conciliatory measures to revive a pro-German feeling if he, on his part, cares at all for England's support against the Tzar. So far as I am personally concerned, I have never concealed my doubts as to the actual value of the German alliance. Late last year, in writing my "English Africa," I did not rate it high, and my subsequent journey through Germany to Russia did not elevate it in my estimate. A week ago I spent an evening with an eminent professor who had just returned home from a stay in Germany. The professor in question is a great German scholar, a writer in the *Saturday Review* and *Academy*, and a voluminous contributor to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Having a son married to a German lady, and many friends among the leading German writers of the day, he possesses unusual facilities for ascertaining public feeling in Germany. What he had to say was not encouraging "There can be no doubt about it," he observed, ' that the tide of national hatred against us in Germany is rapidly rising. Our commerce and colonial possessions are envied, and the Germans would dearly love to see us humbled that they might at the same time gratify their spite and pick up the pieces of our Empire."

Now, no one can say that hatred of England is in the remotest degree so widespread a sentiment in Russia as in Germany. Russia and England have hurled some bitter threats at each other of late years, and have narrowly escaped coming to blows; but personally, Englishmen are popular in Russia, and I have never head of Russians being insulted on account of their nationality, in this country. But in Germany we are not only disliked as a nation but individually also. I question whether Sir Morell Mackenzie would have been half as much abused had he been an Italian or Russian instead of an Englishman. Of course in Russia the press is so limited, and the educated public so small, that the mass of the people know nothing of the Anglophobia of such firebrands as Skobeloff, etc. In Germany, however, all the people can read and take part in the politics of the hour, and thus what is a brief spell of anger in Russian administrative circles becomes a widespread feeling of hatred in Germany—a feeling shared by the public equally with the State. Anybody who has travelled in Russia will confirm my statement that ninety-nine out of every hundred English residents in Russia speak kindly of the friendly feeling of the Russian people towards them. Very few will be found who dislike the Russians, and those for the most part will be persons who have never mastered the language or whose lives have not been cast in pleasant places. On the other hand,

I have never discovered a similar unanimity among English residents in Germany. The natural good nature of the Russian causes him, even when he dislikes a foreigner, to treat him with a show of friendliness; but the German takes no pains to conceal his dislikes, and hence the English resident is not so happy in Germany as in Russia. As a nation, Russians often speak of us as repulsively cold; but the fact remains that the two races mix well together, and the warmest friendships grow up between them; while, on the other hand, the Russians hate the Germans, individually as well as nationally, as much as the Germans hate us. Thus while I have always held that the aims of Russia in Afghanistan, Persia, Turkey, and Corea were too much opposed to the interests of England to hope for the alliance dreamed of by the Russophiles, I have at the same time never concealed my conviction that an alliance with Russia would probably work better than one with Germany on account of the greater sympathy, between individual Russians and Englishmen than between Germans and Englishmen.

Such being the case, it has always seemed to me that those who would, for the sake of English interests, unduly inflate Germany in order to depress and crush Russia, would simply cause the Empire to jump out of the frying-pan into the fire. Russia on the Helmund, or down at the Persian Gulf, would be a dangerous neighbour for India; but so also would Germany in Holland be a menace to the security of England. Germany during the last few years has shown that she can be as exacting as Russia. Angra Pequena, New Guinea, and Samoa are stings to English pride as galling as Penjdeh. Russia is a ruthless, unscrupulous foe; but who can say Germany is better judging by the career of Prince Bismark. To my view, Germany is the more to be feared of the two; because Russia's ruthlessness is that of a "veneered barbarian"—as Russophobes put it—over which we can hope our skill and enlightenment to prevail to some degree; but the ruthlessness of Germany is that of a cultured, highly organized nation, against which our inferior education and utter absence of organization are likely to tend to our disadvantage. Owing to geographical circumstances which we cannot rectify, our Imperial interests not only clash with those of Russia, but with those of Germany and France also. Recent events surely demonstrate clearly enough that if Germany only had the power, she would prove a most unaccommodating neighbour in various parts of the world. During our last conflict with Russia, she availed herself to the utmost of the opportunity of seizing territory, and it was only by the lucky discovery of gold in the Transvaal, and the northward

rush that ensued, that Prince Bismarck's project was upset of extending German power across South Africa from the Orange River to St. Lucia Bay, and, in conjunction with the Boers, reducing English Africa to an insignificant colony, debarred all expansion towards the Zambesi. The rising Roumelia, leading to the break-up of the understanding between Russia and Germany, and the menace of a Franco-Russian invasion luckily intervened to compel Germany to turn from South Africa to home affairs; but had this and the gold discovery not occurred, our dominion in South Africa would have been in serious danger of being ultimately wrecked. As it was, we lost our predominance at Zanzibar, and the whole of Damaraland, hitherto regarded as British territory. In general, Lord Salisbury's African policy has not been a brilliant one, and if these sacrifices have been made to secure to us the German alliance, I am afraid we have made a very bad bargain. If Germany can help us against Russia, we also can help her against that power; and the obligation being mutual, there is no reason whatever why we should submit to blackmail in order to keep German statesmen in good humour. As it is, these concessions have availed us nothing. They did not secure us better terms in the settlement of the Afghan frontier, nor have they made the German Government more careful of wounding English susceptibilities. The Samoan affair is a case in point; while the downright hostility shown by the German official press on every possible occasion is a proof of the liittle esteem in which we are held at Berlin.

On this account, seeing that we have to deal with two merciless despotic States, to waste our strength in helping one to crush the other would be to expose ourselves in turn to the fate that befell Austria after she had assisted Prussia to subjugate poor little Denmark. Between the German wolf and the Russian bear there is not much to choose, and, if anything, we should rather rejoice that Russia is as strong as she is, rather than wish her crushed and dismembered like another Poland, for her animosity to Germany serves as a useful check upon the aggrandizing policy of the latter. An alliance with Germany, Austria, and Italy against Russia might prevent Russia seizing Constantinople; but I am by no means sure that it could possibly work in protecting Afghanistan and Persia from Russia's insidious intrigue. But even if it did, what guarantee could it afford England against a repetition of the Samoan affair and the recent sudden swoopings upon African territory contiguous to our possessions and permeated with our trade. Moreover, it cannot but be remembered that our free institutions and our free press are obnoxious to such despotic States as Germany, and that while a treaty of alliance might

be interpreted one way to drag us into a European conflict, repugnant to our feelings at the moment, it might on the other hand be so construed another way as to leave us face to face with Russia in a new advance into Afghanistan or Persia. Altogether, therefore, there is much to be said in explanation of the aversion with which the British public regards all proposals to link the fate of England with that of Germany and I am persuaded that I should not be alone in conducting an agitation against any such policy.

The objection to Germany does not apply to Italy. Although the army of Italy is not so large and well organized as that of Germany, it would be able to furnish a more powerful contingent for Indian defence, because not a single soldier would be needed to defend Italy against Russian attack, whereas if Germany aided us she would have to keep a large proportion of troops at home to protect the country against a Russian invasion. If Germany were invaded by Russia, it is certain France would follow suit, whereas it is by no means equally certain that if Italy helped us France would attack the Italians. But this is pushing the subject into the region of pure speculation. What is more to the point is that Italians possess for us a friendship contrasting strongly with the hatred of Germany, while they have no aims or interests antagonistic to our own. I am of opinion that we might just as well have annexed Massowah ourselves as let Italy do it ; but the Italians now have the place, they treat our interests kindly, and they form a useful counterpoise to France in the Red Sea. Much, consequently, can be said in favour of an Italian alliance lacking in the case of Germany. All the same, I strongly dissent from such military writers as Colonel Maurice, who would base the whole defence of the Empire upon two *corps d'armee* and a treaty of alliance with Germany, Austria, and Italy. Within the borders of our Empire we possessed enormous resources, which only need organization to revive the waning respect of Europe with regard to our power. To apply ourselves to the organization of those resources would be a far more useful task than everlastingly patching up the army at home, and entangling ourselves with the affairs of Europe. Isolation may have its disadvantages, but at the same time so evenly balanced are the rivalries of Europe that England practically possesses the casting vote—a circumstance which Lord Salisbury has never properly appreciated, or his policy would have been far more robust, not only as concerns Russia but Germany also. If Penjdeh is a stain on Mr. Gladstone's statesmanship, Zanzibar is no less a stain on Lord Salisbury's. That the interests of over 10,000 of our Indian subjects in Zanzibar, to say nothing of those of our numerous merchants and missionaries, should have been sacrificed to conciliate a country having only a

few traders and an insignificant trade there is a disgrace to the statesmanship of the present administration. What makes the sacrifice the more intolerable is the fact that it has been entirely useless. We certainly have not gained the good-will of Germany by yielding to her our influence and power on the East African coast, while we have assuredly laid the basis of many dangerous conflicts with her there in the future. Those who have made a study of the African problem are convinced that these conflicts will be so serious that they would probably upset any alliance between England and Germany against Russia if such happened to exist on paper. I do not think however that, in view of the growing national antagonism between Germany and England, there is the slightest chance of a regular alliance with Germany against Russia being brought about. All the more reason, therefore, for making the defence of India in Afghanistan additionally solid, so as to be better able to face Russia without European allies.

GERMANY, RUSSIA AND ENGLAND.

LONDON, *November 30th, 1888.*

YESTERDAY'S *Times* contained a very ugly little telegram from Berlin. It was a translation of a semi-official note, in which England was informed that if she did not prove accommodating on the East African Coast, Germany would make it hot for her on the Continent. Of course it was not worded so plainly as this, but no one could mistake its purport. After disclosing that between England and Germany there is a difference of opinion as to whether the Sultan of Zanzibar should be held directly responsible for the recent revolt against Germany along the coast, the note went on to say that "should the policy of the Opposition, with its anti-German proposals and tendencies, get the upper hand in England, we should be forced to conclude that England thinks she does not stand in need of Germany's friendship; and also that in no circumstances could she be likely to do so in the future. We should lament this very much, while conscious of our impotence to alter it. Yet the reaction would be sure to make itself felt, sooner or later, in the field of European policy. Situations in which England would feel the want of friendship on the Continent are perhaps not probable in the immediate future, but they are by no means impossible." By Opposition, the German Government can hardly mean the Gladstonians, because they have

no policy at all in regard to East Africa, and have not sought to criticise or attack Lord Salisbury up to now, although he has repeatedly offered them a good target to fire at. The hostility to Germany in East Africa proceeds from all parties, and its most prominent exponents are members of the Conservative party. For some time past there has been a growing feeling of discontent at the way the Germans are spoiling our old-established interests at Zanzibar ; and among Conservative politicians there has been much grumbling, although out of fear of helping back into office Mr. Gladstone, it has not until recently been openly expressed. But the seizure of the entire coast line of the Sultan of Zanzibar's dominions, and the high-handedness of the Germans towards our missionaries, traders, and Indian subjects, have aroused a strong feeling of dissatisfaction, resulting in a widely expressed clamour not to participate in any land operations, and so let the Germans recover their so-called "influence" the best way they can. This feeling is admirably displayed in a fearless, candid letter in the *Times* of yesterday from Joseph Thomson, the African traveller, who indignantly denounces Lord Salisbury for his wholesale surrender of English interests to Germany.

If I mistake not, this letter and the movement which it and others will inaugurate will lead to a decided stand being made against Germany on the East African Coast. The pot has been long simmering ; it threatens now to boil over. Germany will not like this, but she has brought it upon herself by her audacious filching of our interests at Zanzibar. One result of this dislike is that she will stir up Russia against us perhaps—that is the threat conveyed in the semi-official note. I am quite content that she should do this, for the simple reason that it is a game that two can play. If she can help Russia against us, we can help Russia against her. The loss of India would cause an upset of England for a time, but it would not smash up the Empire. Deprived of work or ruined through the loss of India, several millions would have to swarm out of England for the Colonies, and those Colonies would continue to safeguard the mother-country itself from subjugation. But if Russia and France were allowed by England to smash up Germany, it would be absolute ruin to the German Empire, and the country would be "blanched" (to use Prince Bismarck's elegant threat towards France) until recovery would be hopeless. Therefore, when Germany uses threats, she is more likely to lose than gain by them. England may be cajoled or led, but she will not be driven. If we are to be threatened by Germany every time we refuse to obey her behests, the sooner we face her out and out as a foe the better. An alliance with Germany, in which England would always have to yield to the wishes of Prince Bismarck,

would be too galling for this country. We could hardly be worse off if we accepted a similar alliance from Russia, for after all the Russians are a good-natured people, with generous impulses, and would be more easy to deal with than the brutal, domineering statesmen of Germany. Sometime ago I expressed the opinion that any defence of India, based upon an assumed alliance with Germany, would be a risky one, because we should be always at Germany's mercy, and she would take advantage of the position to squeeze everything out of us she could. She is trying on this game now. "Yield at Zanzibar, or the Russians will be disturbing you on the Afghan frontier." Of the two, far better to hold our own at Zanzibar, and let her do her worst in stirring up Russia. Fortunately, Russia quite understands Germany's desire to make a catspaw of her, and is not likely to be so ready to attack England as a few years ago. This tendency to dwell at peace with England, at least for a time, is one that we should take advantage of to the fullest. Now is the auspicious period for consolidating ourselves on the Indian frontier, and the more we take advantage of this, the better we shall be able to deal with Germany and Russia in the future.

Unfortunately this does not appear to be altogether realized in India, for excluding the railway to the Khojak Pass and the consolidation of our position in the Peshin district, little is being done to prepare the border for a Russian attack. The frontier of Beluchistan, stretching from the Arabian Sea near Gwadur to the Seistan region, ought to be thoroughly organized and manned with Indian picquets. The presence of English officials along the frontier there, showing to the world, as well as to Persia, that the frontier was not simply the frontier of Beluchistan but of India itself, would have a powerful political effect, and prepare the way for the preponderance of our influence in the Persian country further west of Gwadur, and the opening up of those routes from the Arabian Sea to the Helmund which would be indispensible in the event of a great war. The extension of the railway system from Rohri or Quetta to the River Helmund *viâ* Nushki is the second measure, and the construction of a strategical line from Gwadur to the Helmund the third. Apparently, it is not clearly understood, either at home or in India, that we can do nothing against Russia's line of attack from Moscow to Merv *viâ* Krasnovodsk, whether from the Caucasus, Armenia, or Persia; otherwise, in view of the stress that must infallibly be laid upon Indian defences, the Helmund line would be organized with as little delay as possible. That is the very note of the policy I am persistently advocating at present.

The more we strengthen the defences of India, the more we shall not only restrain Russia from attacking us, but also Germany

from poaching on our preserves in Africa and the Pacific. Weakness on the Helmund is not simply weakness for India, but weakness for Africa also. Thanks to the weakness of the Afghan frontier from Saraks to Khoja Saleh, which Lord Ripon repeatedly refused to attempt to organize, we not only lost Pul-i-Khatun, Penjdeh, and other points, but the Zanzibar coast, Damaraland, and New Guinea as well. This is a lesson that ought not to be forgotten. As regards rapacity, there is not a pin to choose between Germany and Russia. One is as determined to squeeze us as the other. All the more reason, therefore, that we should give neither a chance of profiting by our weakness, whether on the Helmund or elsewhere.



A SUMMER TRUCE FOR EUROPE.



LONDON, *January 18th, 1889.*

APPARENTLY the political weather is set fair for the next few months. The French have made up their minds to render the Paris International Exhibition a great success, and, until the show is over, they may be expected to abstain from war. The effect of this will be that Europe will remain at peace throughout the summer, and the assurances of the different Emperors and their Ministers of late of a tranquil year will probably be realised so far as the next six months is concerned. At present the maintenance of peace rests chiefly with France. Russia, it is true, is also a restless power ; but there is no immediate chance of her starting a war on her own account, unless France be ready to follow suit ; and France would prefer a postponement until the International Exhibition is over. Russia has aims in Europe which may in the future lead to war ; but she is not animated by that determination to exact revenge which, on the first favourable opportunity, will cause France to fly at the throat of Germany. Russia it is true also hates Germany ; but she has not made it a national aim to smash Germany, which is the case with France. Thus, unless events in the Balkan peninsula compel Russia to attack Austria, the Tzar will not fall upon Germany out of "sheer cussedness," and will always wait for France to fire the first shot. Then the intervention, and the immediate intervention, of Russia may be looked upon as a moral certainty; for it has become a national interest with Russia, opposed as she is by Germany and Austria, to prevent France being crushed; and she clearly realises that the quickest and cheapest way to effect this is not to wait until France is defeated, but to cross the frontier

simultaneously. Hence the permanent concentration of armed masses on the Austro-German frontier, ready to enter Germany the moment French begin. But Russia will not move until the French move; and if the French prefer playing to fighting during the present year of grace, there will be no great war in Europe.

Russia and France, on the one hand, and Germany, Austria, and Italy, on the other, are so evenly matched that neither of the two parties will commence a war heedlessly. I am aware that Sir Charles Dilke, Colonel Maurice, and several other persons have made elaborate calculations, of a more or less conflicting character as to the amount of military power possessed by either side; but where the case is one of which the result cannot be pretty safely forecasted, statesmen of the Bismarck, Giers, and even of the Boulanger type, are not likely to rush into war. If France and Russia considered themselves more than a match for Austria and Germany, they would have probably gone to war last year; and if Austria and Germany with the aid of Italy, felt themselves able to crush France, while at the same time keeping Russia at bay, they would have doubtless attempted to do so ere now. But neither side has felt itself overwhelmingly stronger than the other; and consequently both have devoted their money and energies to a race of armaments in order to secure a superiority. Probably before this period of absolute superiority is reached, something will occur that will compel one or the other party to diplomatically gall the other beyond endurance, and the magazine rifles will go off of themselves. But in the meantime a truce is better than a war at an inconvenient moment; and hence, if the French are resolved on six months' peace, Germany is not likely to disturb their good resolution.

In this condition of things, England, who possesses a casting vote coveted by the two parties, ought to be able in consequence to maintain a firm foreign policy worthy of her splendid Empire. Unfortunately there is hardly a pin to choose between the poltroonery of the Liberals when in office and the cowardice of the Conservatives. No Englishman who has read the manly message of Secretary Whitney to the American Admiral at Samoa this week, and is properly acquainted with the politics of the Pacific, can avoid feeling that in the matter of holding one's head erect and walking straight, the Americans have taught a lesson to the slouching Prime Minister of our own country. The way that English interests have been pushed aside, and international engagements violated by Germany in Samoa, make one almost asham ed of being an Englishman. The German Government have stuck to their Consuls all along, and winked at their unscrupulosities; while the late English Consul at Samoa was snubbed by the Foreign Office for endeavouring to prevent our interests from being swamped. Of the

two, our interests are far greater in Samoa than those of the United States; yet the United States alone have dared to beard Prince Bismarck, and tell him he cannot be allowed to have his own way. A deal of stuff is spoken and written by Conservative politicians of their unswerving watchfulness over the interests of the Empire; but not one has raised a word of protest against Lord Salisbury's miserable policy in regard to Samoa. Had the Liberals been in office, the Ashmead Bartletts of the Conservative opposition would have gone spinning about the country like howling dervishes; but their own "boss" is the bungler on this occasion, which makes all the difference, and Lord Salisbury might lose half-a-dozen Samoas without any hound of the Conservative back barking at his master.

If the truce prevail in Europe, the probability is that we shall experience more of these colonial difficulties, and thus a calm on the Continent will not be such an unmixed advantage as it might seem at first sight. In South Africa the repudiation of the German protectorate by the Chiefs of Damaraland is bound to lead to unpleasantness. Very little support would be needed to prevent Germany ever making good her claims in that quarter; but the Colonial office, which is jealous enough of our own colonists at the Cape—our own fellow-subjects is ready enough to give any aid to the Germans. In this respect the administration of Lord Salisbury have much to answer for as well as that of the wet blanket, Lord Knutsford, whose failure as a statesman I was glad to see exposed in your columns by Colonel Malleson the other day. Lord Knutsford would make a most efficient administrator of such tea and bread-and-butter establishments as those of the ærated Bread Company of the Lockhart description; but when it comes to ruling vast colonial possessions, with a warm regard for the progress, prosperity, and expansion of one and all, not only in their own interests but for the benefit of the mother-country as well, one can only look upon him as a clerical iceberg, set in office for no other purpose than to cool the British Empire. Burke has well said that "great Empires and little minds go ill together." Your readers will have seen sufficient references to the Cossack mission to Abyssinia without my repeating the details in this letter. Ashinoff, the leader, is a born adventurer whose career was of a very ambiguous and even, it is said, of a shady description until he conceived the idea of paying a visit to Abyssinia. On his return he was taken up by the *Moscow Gazette*, the *Novoe Vremya*, and two or three other papers, who advocated an alliance with the Negus in order to secure for Russia a foothold in the Red Sea. Later on the Cossack received encouragement from the higher Russian clergy, who detected sufficient affinity in the religion of the two countries to make it a Russian interest to preserve the Abyssinians

from the Roman Catholic propaganda of Italy and France. Once Pobiedonostseff was infected with this idea, the future of Ashinoff was assured. The Imperial family "took him up," the Government rendered every assistance, and Ashinoff has now proceeded to the Red Sea with a party of priests and officers whose operations will need a good deal of watching. Although an honest regard for the Russo-Greek faith has had something to do with the despatch of the expedition, it is impossible to feel that its aims are wholly spiritual. My own impression is that if any decent port can be "jumped" in the Red Sea, the Ashinoff mission will make for it. If sufficiently successful, the Government will give them further aid, and gradually establish a title to the place; if they fail, the affair will be treated as a purely private adventure. England and Italy between them ought to be able to frustrate any designs along the line of coast controlled by themselves and Egypt; but one cannot be so sure of France. The support of Russia in a European war is too precious a thing to be lost by haggling over a Red Sea port, and I should not be at all surprised if Ashinoff's little game is not pretty well known to the French authorities, however much they may affect to oppose it.

THE ABDICATION OF KING MILAN.

LONDON, *March 7th, 1889.*

THE abdication of that mean and cowardly personage, King Milan, which is the sensation of to-day, may probably prove a blessing in disguise to this country, by calling off Russia's attention again from the Afghan frontier. Once upon a time it used to be fashionable on the part of Liberal politicians (really one can hardly apply the term statesmen to such ephemera) to express their deep satisfaction whenever Russia made a fresh advance in Central Asia, on the ground that the more she buried herself in the Asiatic wilds, the less capable she would become of doing harm in Europe. To-day the boot is upon the other leg, and politicians congratulate themselves when Russia is embroiled with Austria and Germany in Europe, because it keeps her out of mischief in Asia. There is a deal of truth in this new way of looking at things. There can be hardly a doubt that but for the oppurtune revolt in East Roumelia, and the commencement of that series of events culminating with the kidnapping of Prince Alexander of Battenberg (a turmoil as vexatious to Prince Bismarck as to M. de Giers), the events of Penjdeh would have been followed by a seizure of Herat and Afghan-

Turkistan, while Germany would have accomplished her alliance with the Boers and secured predominance in South Africa. It is because German policy is so interwoven with Russian that I do not look upon the abdication of King Milan with that feeling of dismay that seems to have seized upon the English press. I do not forget that a few months ago the semi-official Berlin press threatened England that, if she were not accommodating at Zanzibar, she might look out for squalls in Asia. Your readers may remember that I drew special attention to this threat, and forecasted that as the Government could not possibly yield any further to Prince Bismarck's policy in East Africa, we ought to prepare for disturbances on the Afghan frontier. Surely enough, in due course, Lord Salisbury refusing to accede to Zanzibar passing wholly under Germany's control, the Russians took advantage of the Amir's presence in Afghan Turkistan to mobilize their forces on the Oxus, and the situation has been serious there for several weeks past. Within the last few days, since the marriage of Prince Alexander, the embroilment of Prince Ferdinand with the Bulgarian church, and the contemplated abdication of King Milan, brought the Balkan peninsula again to the front, the tension has lessened on the Afghan frontier, and I should not be at all surprised if the Russian forces there melted away as rapidly as they collected. Russia may want a profitable war, but she does not wish for two wars at once. A conflict with Afghanistan, and possibly with England, is not to be apprehended while there is a chance of war in Europe. And as Russia at Belgrade is less to be feared by England than Russia at Herat, I must say that I am rather pleased at the turn events have taken than otherwise.

No student of history can look back five years—to the time when Germany and Russia were at peace, and Prince Bismarck held all Europe, so to say, in his hand—without feeling that it is better that Germany should be perplexed and weak, and Russia be on bad terms with her, than that Berlin and St. Petersburg should be able to do what they like to plunder British interests. Germany as a friend is almost as bad as Germany as an enemy; because she blackmails those that she helps, and turns with suddenness from a friend to a foe if her exactions are not immediately complied with. It is for this reason that I have always denied the wisdom of the policy of Colonel Maurice and others in resting the defence of India upon a German alliance. With States, as with men, there is only one ally who is worth relying upon—that is, one's own self. A man who is really sound and strong will experience no difficulty in getting allies in the hour of danger, if he be a generous friend in the hour of peace; while a weak man resting mainly upon allies, must expect to be plundered in time of peace as well as forsaken in time of war. If the German alliance is worth anything to

England, the English alliance is quite of corresponding value to Germany, and there is no reason why Lord Salisbury should pay a single sixpence for it. It is because he has not properly realised this that so much has been yielded in Zanzibar, Samoa, and elsewhere. Colonel Maurice and similar writers would have us tie ourselves by treaty to Germany; but that is what the nation would never tolerate, and I am of opinion that military men would be better employed in putting our ramshackled War Office in order than abusing the democracy for not yielding to this little fad. The Europe that suits England best is not a diplomatically crushed Europe, with Prince Bismarck towering in the middle, but a Europe of almost warring States, so evenly balanced that neither Russia, Germany, nor France can feel strong enough to laud over the rest, and all debarred by fear of attack by one another from poaching upon the preserves of our Empire. Seeing how much we suffered last time Germany held a predominant position, the recent weakening she has experienced by the prostration of Austrian policy is a matter for congratulation rather than otherwise. Austria, indeed, has been hard hit of late. The suicide of the Crown Prince, the rise of the pro-Russian party in Roumania, the awkward embroglio between Prince Ferdinand and the Bulgarian church, the political suicide of Prince Alexander of Battenberg, by his marriage with an actress, and now the abdication of King Milan—all these are a succession of blows which the policy of no other State has experienced in modern times. It would be too much to expect that Russia should, on the strength of them, make an early advance into the Balkan peninsula, but they certainly tend to promote such a movement. The gravity of the present situation arises from the fact that whereas on the last critical occasion—that is to say, when General Kaulbars went to Bulgaria to coerce the principality and was laughed out of the country—Russia was absolutely unprepared for war and had to eat the leek. She is now practically ready for a campaign, and is once more mistress of events instead of being at their mercy. She had no squadron when Prince Alexander was kidnapped. She has now one afloat able to prevent the Turkish fleet entering the Black Sea and fit to dominate the Danube. Had she gone to war with Austria then, the Germans would have been in possession of the Vistula province before Russia could have mobilized her forces. To-day Russia holds such masses of troops in readiness on the European frontier that this would be impossible, and the campaign would take place on German or Austrian territory. General Boulanger has also in the meanwhile practically attained the head of affairs in France. Altogether therefore Russia is in a position to play a strong diplomatic game, and it is better that this should be at the expense of Austria and Germany than at that of the Amir.

PEACE ON PIECRUST.

LONDON, *October 17th, 1889.*

PERSONS who are close students of European politics cannot fail to be highly diverted at the blows and counter-blows that are almost daily interchanged between the League of Peace and the Franco-Russian combination. Some days an advantage falls to one, other days to another of the bellicose parties. Last week, Russia decided to reinforce her army on the Armenian border and make a railway to Meshed. Against this, our clever Conservative press was happy at being able to get the affront conveyed to the Tzar by the German Emperor specially visiting Kiel to inspect the British Fleet, and refusing to remain there a few hours longer to greet his Russian visitor. This week, Queen Natalie scored more than one success for Russia in the lodgment she has effected in Belgrade ; on the other hand, Russia lost a point by having her private emissary, Prince Dolgoroucki, hustled unceremoniously out of Bulgaria. At Berlin the Tzar scored one by refusing to see Prince Ferdinand who had been invited by Bismarck to suddenly repair to Munich to be within call if he could manage to bring about a conference. On the other hand, Russia and France, suffered a severe blow, and the League of Peace gained proportionately in prestige, by the promulgation of an Italian protectorate over Abyssinia. It will be interesting to watch the next move. Signor Crispi announced this week that war is "not imminent," but confessed things were "very critical a short time ago." A short time ago, he made precisely the same declaration to Europe. The assumption is pretty fair, therefore, that although war is never imminent in Europe, yet things are always critical. The present peace, in a word, is a peace on piecrust. It may last a long time in the form of a truce ; it is just as likely to cave in some morning unexpectedly, and involve all Europe in a war of Napoleonic magnitude.

Out of that war I sincerely trust we shall keep. In its present mood I believe the British public would refuse to allow any Government to intervene, unless Italy happened to be hard pressed. England has a keen sympathy for Italian liberty, and would not readily allow it to be destroyed ; but if Italy were safe from invasion, I do not think she would intervene to save German despotism from ruin. In spite of the recent civilities between the German and English Courts, it is useless to deny the fact that the German Government is most unpopular in this country. Its militarism is hated by the Liberal and Radical parties, and even

those who would not like to see Germany struck down by Russia and France openly express their fears as to the dangers that would arise to the cause of constitutional freedom if Germany were as successful again as she was in 1870. It is felt that triumphant Germany would abuse her success to a decree disastrous to England. No reliance is placed in her allegedly limited sense of gratitude. Curiously, this feeling does not exist in regard to Italy. Whatever may be the nonsense written by Mr. Gladstone, or some one else, in the October issue of the *Contemporary*, the British public believe in Italy because the impression is general that Italy would be grateful for our aid and not take advantage of increased strength to prey upon our interests. England would revolt at seeing France mistress again of the destinies of Italy, and popular feeling, I am convinced, would force the coldest Government into hostilities to save Rome. I am not so sure that a majority of the public would clamour with equal fervour to save Berlin or Vienna.

Some years ago before Italy had joined the League of Peace, and while she was yet isolated and neglected by the other Powers, I wrote a long and elaborate article in the London *Morning Post* entitled "Our Best Possible Ally in Europe." In this article, which attracted a good deal of attention at the time, and was doubtless ascribed to some high and mighty embodiment of diplomatic wisdom, I pointed out that, providing we could come to an arrangement with Italy, there was no Power better able to help us on the Afghan frontier than the one controlled by King Humbert. To fight Russia's overwhelming Caspian forces, we required a European army of modern magnitude. Our own was too small. To increase our forces, our statesmen and generals recommended a Turkish alliance. The defect of this arrangement was that it enlarged the area to be defended by compelling us in return to undertake the defence of the Turkish dominions. Moreover, although Turkey might supply men, she could not furnish anything else. Italy, on the other hand, could not be attacked by Russia, and would therefore require no home army for defence. She could furnish more trained soldiers than Turkey, and those troops would be Europeans instead of Asiatics. Those troops again would be half on the road to India, and, thanks to the geographical get-at-ability of Italy, could be assembled and sent on in infinitely less time than the soldiers of Turkey. Finally, unless Turkey were attacked, we could confine the war to Afghanistan and Persia, and not have to protect at one and the same time Constantinople, Erzeroum, Trebizonde, Bagdad, Herat, Kandahar and Kabul. The question was—could we buy this alliance, and what should we pay for it?

In reply to these questions I recommended an abandonment of all further efforts to revive the French alliance, and to purchase the

support of Italy by consistently and persistently aiding her in her colonial aims. I believe that had the Gladstone Government adopted such a policy it would have derived as much diplomatic benefit from the Italian alliance as Prince Bismarck has done since. The Afghan frontier negotiations might have worn a different complexion, and Penjdeh never added to the stains that dim the lustre of England's honour had Russia known the Italian army was ready to march for Herat. However, nothing came of the idea in this country, and it was not until Bismarck consummated the Italian alliance and began to wield the League of Peace in a most dexterous fashion before Russia and France, that England became impressed with the military and naval importance of Italy. Then our Government began in a slow and timid sort of way to allow her to make a lodgment in the Red Sea. France was furious, but Germany supported Italy, and Massowah was occupied. Russia then strove to get a naval station in that quarter, and secretly supported the Cossack Ashinoff in his mission to the Abyssinian people. When he went thither a second time the policy of France ought to have been to have helped Russia in her designs, but at the expense of the Italians. Instead of which it was the French who routed and drove away the Russians and left the coast all clear for the Italians to include it in their Abyssinian protectorate. The inclusion of Abyssinia in the dominions of Italy is therefore a blow at Russia as well as at France. The former has lost all chance of a naval station as well as that curious alliance of the Abyssinian and Russo-Greek churches that the Russian Synod had sought to bring about. France has now to deal with an amplified Italian colony in the Red Sea, instead of a smaller one mitigated by a Russian naval station, and as Italy has the sympathy, if not support, of England, France, after all her efforts, finds herself reduced to a relatively insignificant position in that quarter. How she can possibly respond to this blow struck at her prestige it is not easy to see, but it is hardly to be expected that she will refrain from attempting to strike a counterblow by making some other move in Africa.

The alliance of France with Russia somewhat changes the aspect of affairs existing when I advocated that Italy should be invited to help us defend the Afghan frontier. Italy would now have to keep an army at home to defend herself against a French attack. All the same, we might still draw largely on the Italian force in the event of a war with Russia. If we had a second Earl Beaconsfield or Prince Bismarck at the head of our affairs, the understanding with Italy would be used in a variety of ways to strengthen our position in the East. Why does not Lord Salisbury invite a few Italian Generals to visit the Indo-Afghan frontier and establish friendly relations between the armies of Italy and India?

It is little strokes of this sort that impart prestige to the diplomacy of a country, and enable the real statesmen to secure the results of great campaigns without resorting to actual war. Unfortunately, our institutions seem capable now-a-days of producing only hand-to-mouth politicians. From sheer habit we call some of them statesmen, but is there one that is really worthy of the name?

GOLD FROM PAPER LAND.

LONDON, *January 31st, 1890.*

THERE is something very curious in the announcement this week that Russia has sent a million of money to London to relieve our poverty-stricken Bank of England. This, indeed, is like manna from the sky. City eyes opened in wonder when the *Times* published the news that a million sterling in gold imperials was on its way from paper St. Petersburg to golden London. Two or three days ago, the previous consignment duly arrived, and most of it, I presume, is now in the vaults of the Bank of England, or is being re-coined at the mint into sovereigns. The new arrival has not exercised any effect on the Bank rate, which still stands obstinately at six per cent, but it unquestionably has had a healthy influence on Russian credit. People in the city think more highly of Russia than they did a week ago. There is no real justification for the feeling, but the credit of nations, as of individuals, depends largely on chance circumstances. The Russian Minister of Finance was pretty well aware when he sent the gold over to London, what a good effect the consignment would have, and this consideration influenced him probably quite as much as the high price offered for it by the Bank of England. Since State Secretary Vishnigradsky succeeded Bunge, the German, three years ago, he has made a point of raising Russian credit by similar stroke of cleverness. Bunge was for about four years Minister of Finance, and enjoyed no luck whatever. The death of the previous Emperor had placed Russian credit under a cloud at home and abroad, and in spite of all his efforts, the minister could avoid a yearly deficit, or raise the value of the paper rouble. A loan or two floated at Berlin, towards the end of his career was successful it is true; but the success arose solely from the fact that Bismark for political purposes used the influence of the State to induce the German bankers subscribe to the Russian issue. This led to that German mania for buying up Russian bonds, which pretty well cleared England out of that article.

Recently, since some of the London financial papers have been shown to be edited by highwaymen or footpads, who levy toll on promoters in the delightful style of Turpin of old, every writer who has ever written on finance has done his best to let the world forget the fact; but I really cannot help confessing that during the period to which I refer, 1883-85, I did my level best, week after week, in a financial journal of immaculate purity (and the purity has paid in the long run better than the black mailing business) to induce the British investor to sell his Russian bonds, of course at a good price, to the eager purchaser from Berlin.

The result was what I anticipated. There came a day when the Russians and the Germans, who had mutually despoiled us in Afghanistan and Africa, fell out, and began to cut each others' fiscal throats. Then the Germans groaned that they had so much Russian paper, and I cannot but confess that the groaning was sweet music to a certain resident on Plumstead Common. Even now I look back upon that little financial crusade, that helped to put German gold into English pockets, and Russian paper into German, with a feeling of keen relish that time cannot diminish. I imagine that the Israelites never forgot having despoiled the Egyptians. They must have nudged each other, and nodded and chuckled many a time as they rambled over the desert. It was only when they got to the Promised Land, and began to hustle the poor Gentiles out of their possessions, that they ceased to think of the swag they managed to appropriate by miraculous aid on the banks of the Nile.

I remember seeing Bunge in his office in 1882. He had been a Professor of Political Economy at Kieff. He was a prime pedantic little man, who did not impress me very much. Study and statistics are apt to dry up the juices of a man's body, and render him, however wonderful in other respects, a precise and passionless mummy. Bunge was long in office, but the Emperor suddenly remembered at last that he was a German (this was when Berlin would lend no more money) and he was relieved of his functions. His predecessor had been (General Grieg, a cavalry general, who knew as much about finance as the Grand Llama does of home rule, and was appointed, I suppose, by the same mysterious Providence, that in our own land puts the round men into square holes and the square men 'into the round holes whenever there is a change of ministry. Acting so absurdly ourselves, I feel I should simply cant if I expressed wonder that a pair of spurs should have been put in charge of the finances of Russia. Bunge's successor for a brief term—I forgot him a minute ago when I stated that Vishnigradsky succeeded Bunge—was Senator Abaza. Abaza was famous for two things. The first was for the good of Russia; the second was for the

good of himself. When the Turkish War was raging, and Russian funds were running short, the Russian Government cudgelled its brain in vain to find an easy way of increasing the revenues. Everything in Russia was so well taxed that it was difficult to suggest anything to add to the tariff. Then bright-brained Abaza came to the rescue of the authorities with one little suggestion that proved a gold mine to the Exchequer. The customs dues were at that time all paid in paper. "Pass a decree," said Abaza, "ordering all to be paid in gold." The Government was delighted. It gave a lift to the tariff all round, and scooped up millions of revenue at a stroke. The other little affair was equally ingenious. Abaza had a sugar factory eighty miles from the railway. He stimulated a crusade in favour of sugar cultivation. When the fever was at its height, he induced his railway colleague, General Possiette, to run out a branch line to his factory "in the interests of beet-root." Clevery did a slashing satirist expose this neat little operation when he selected this as a proof the enterprise of Russia, compared with which England and America were nowhere. "Can England or the States" he demanded "point to any instance of State enterprise, where eighty miles of line have been purposely built to connect a single sugar factory with the whole railway system of Russia?" The censor read the eulogy, without perceiving the attack; but Abaza winced when he saw it in print and there was a row over the publicity. Abaza, however, did not long remain in office, then came Vishnigradsky. The latter started under the most adverse circumstance, yet fortune has made him the most successful Finance Minister for thirty years. Trade was dull, banks were breaking, war was feared, and the poor old paper rouble dropped down to one-and-six-pence. I happened to be in Russia on business at the time, and well remember the universal gloom in commercial circles. Russia lost enormously by the fall of the rouble, being compelled to pay most of her outer loans in gold. What is one person's misfortune is often another man's luck. I had to spend a deal of money, and I found it very pleasant to be able to secure half a crown's worth for every eighteen pence I put down. To meet the increased deficit caused by the drain of the gold loans, Vishnigradsky had to increase the taxes, and the growth of the oil trade enabled him to impose a lucrative one on kerosine. A few months later, the pendulum swung back the other way. The war cloud in Europe lifted. The failure of the wheat crop in India caused an enormous demand for Russian corn. This in turn stimulated other business, and in a short time the rouble rose from 1-6 to 1-11. This lightened the drain of the foreign loans, and at the end of the year, what with the inflated revenue from trade, the diminution of the loss in meeting the interest on the loan, and the addition of the £670,000

from the kerosine tax, the Minister had a bumping surplus. Out of this spurt of prosperity, sprang a general readiness in Europe to help Russia convert her loans, and one after another these have been placed on an economical basis, which has further improved Russian credit. The rouble now stands at 2-3, a higher point than for many a year, and sanguine Russians affirm that in time it will reach the climax preceding the Turkish War, when the paper rouble was worth two shillings and nine pence.

Russia is essentially a paper country. One never sees a bit of gold in circulation, and no silver coin of higher value than a sixpence. The silver rouble is like the guinea—a mere figure of speech. Custom dues have to be paid theoretically in gold, but Government coupons exist representing the "Imperial," and are always used instead of the gold coin of the realm. Except at money-changer's or curiosity shops, gold imperials are to be found only at the banks, and to any large extent only in the State Bank and Imperial Treasury. How much gold the Minister of Finance controls in the national hoard no one knows. A very large sum is always kept in readiness for war purposes, and three years ago, when a conflict was apprehended, it was considerably increased by Vishnigradsky. After the war cloud passed over, he still retained the hoard, which further was increased during the spurt of prosperity to which I have referred. When gold began to appreciate, Vishnigradsky wisely kept back his surplus stock from the market with the result that a gold famine having arisen in London, he has been able to secure a lucrative sum for his auriferous commodity. If the famine continues, and the outlook is still very depressing, perhaps the Minister may perhaps part with a million or two more from his coffers. This would merely relieve the plethora that prevails in the Treasury at St. Petersburg. It is, of course, a plethora of a sort. We insist on a certain proportion being observed between the gold in the Bank of England and the paper notes in circulation. Russia dispenses with this trifling formality. She "puts it behind her" as Mr. Podsnap was accustomed to do with inconvenient things. When Professor Bungo was in office, he grew tired of critics arguing about Free Trade. So the police were sent round with wagons one morning to stop all the libraries of books on that subject, and now Russians are liable to six months' imprisonment if they are caught with *Adam Smith* in their possession. What a delightful way of settling the issue between Protectionism and Free Trade. Grossly immoral and tyrannical, of course, but who (of the general public) would not like to be able to settle in a similar fashion, all the fanatics who fight for or against that bit of red rag—bimetallism.



THE TEUTON ON THE TRAMP.

LONDON, *February 28th, 1890.*

RUSSIA is troubling herself very much just now with the alleged influx of German settlers into the southern provinces. The other day the anti-German fever raged mainly against the migration of Germans into the western provinces. As a result of the outcry, repressive laws were passed to put a stop to this. It is now complained that these enactments do not apply to the southern provinces. The consequence is that the Germans, forbidden to settle in the valley of the Vistula, have taken to passing across the prohibited provinces and squatting down on lands in the valley of the Dnieper. Instead of making tracks for Warsaw they steer their course past Kieff in the direction of Odessa. Hence the demand for an immediate Government investigation, the imposition of restrictive laws, and in a word the inauguration of a bad time generally for the German settler on the Russian steppes.

In all likelihood the Russian Government will yield to the clamour, if, indeed, it has not actually inspired it. The Tzar is determined to nationalize his Empire. He will tolerate no longer any foreign elements of a discordant character in it. Everybody must be a Russian or clear out. The policy may seem a brutal one, but it is no more than a copy of the policy of Germany during the last twenty years. If it is an unenlightened policy the Tzar can at least excuse himself on the ground that he has imitated the policy of a Government claiming to be the most enlightened and cultured in the world. Moreover, although there seems a tendency now to pass the institutions of Finland through the Russian mangle and make them uniform with the rest of the Empire, there is this to be said on behalf of the Government, that it is the Germans only who are being at present subjected to this unpleasant nationalizing policy. No attempt is being made to Russianize the Tartars, the Caucasians, the Turkomans, or the people of Bokhara. These are allowed to pursue the even tenor of their way unharassed in their religious observances; they are allowed to maintain all their tribal peculiarities, and are not pressed in the least to give up their language for the speech of their conquerors. Perhaps their turn may come in the future. At present it is the Germans, and the Germans alone who are catching it. Unlucky is the Teuton, earning his livelihood in Russia, who does not want to surrender his nationality, his tongue and even his religion.

No one to my knowledge has yet pointed out that a serious struggle is impending between the Russo-Greek and Protestant religions in Russia. Hitherto, the Russian Government has been extremely tolerant of Protestantism. It was a crime for an orthodox Russian to turn Protestant, but the law was rarely enforced. So long as the Lutherans did not attempt to make converts every tolerance was shown them. With the persecution of the Germans has developed a most intolerant feeling towards their religion. The press rarely refers to the pastors in the Baltic Provinces except in terms of the most venomous description. They are accused of tyrannically compelling the Esthonians and other broken races to become members of the Protestant faith. They are stated to be the chief opponents to the measures for Russianizing the country, and it is affirmed that they secretly encourage in Russia the growth of the Strindist and other heretical sects. For this reason the German Bible has been put under a ban, and the circulation of the Russian version alone permitted. Fresh laws have been imposed punishing with heavier penalties the crime of making a Protestant of an orthodox believer, and a close watch is placed upon the intercourse between Lutheran pastors and the numerous sectaries of Russia.

The latter have been increasing largely in numbers of late years. The Russo-Greek faith, in common with every other religion is on its trial, and is suffering more by loss of believers than is commonly imagined in Europe. The reactionary policy of the present Emperor is largely to blame for this. Guided by that mediæval fanatic Pobiedonostseff, he has turned back the hands of the religious clock, and tried to enforce the observances of practices, and the retention of belief fit only for grandmothers in their dotage. Possibly, it is quite true that at a remote age St. Nicholas sailed down the river Treva on a grindstone, but if people now-a-days prefer not to believe the story, it is absurd for an Emperor to try and make them. Since he came to the throne it has been the policy of the present Tzar to screw up the orthodox faith and allow no such expansion of belief, as is observable in most other religions to-day. The result is that the people, ordered by the Tchinovoniks to listen more dutifully to the inspired utterances of the Pope, have in many cases gone right against the latter and started religions of their own. This is particularly the case in South Russia, where hundreds of sects exist and flourish in spite of the persecution to which they are subjected by the authorities. It is noteworthy that most of these sects, in breaking away from the orthodox faith, discard the veneration of images, abandon their belief in the saints, abolish the clergyman, and pin their creed upon the four Gospels. In other words, they become so like many

of the Western dissidents from Romanism that they are to all intents and purposes Protestants.

In South Russia, as along the Volga, there are numerous German colonies which have been in existence since the time of Catherine the Great. It is these colonies that are now charged with affording an example to the Russian sectaries, and some of the St. Petersburg papers go so far as to assert that if there were no Lutheran churches in Provincial Russia there would be no dissent. This, of course, is sheer nonsense, because the anti-orthodox movements is quite as preceptible in provinces where there is not a single Lutheran church as where German colonies abound; while in all ages hostile sects have split away from the mother church of Russia. However it furnishes a good handle for use against the Germans, and on religious as well as on political grounds it is demanded that the existing Teutonic colonies shall be broken up and dispersed. Some of these colonies are so old, so populous, so prosperous, and I dare even affirm so loyal, that I question whether the Tzar would carry his Russianizing policy to such an extreme as this; but it is tolerably certain that some thing will be done to prevent new colonies forming in the future. At present land can be bought cheap in South Russia, and whole villages of Germans can establish themselves there. I do not think this will be allowed beyond the present winter.

Where will the German emigrant go then? Up to now a certain number have yearly migrated to Russia, to colonise the vacant tracts after the manner permitted in Canada and the States. What will become of the stream? The workmen and peasants who go to Russia are evidently men who object to America, or they would go there by preference when breaking up their homes. Either they dislike the Atlantic voyage or prefer remaining somewhere on the Continent, closer to the Fatherland. These people, if prevented from entering Russia, will make for some other adjacent country, and I believe will turn their faces towards the Balkan Peninsula and Asia Minor. In that case Russia may lose and Germany gain by the diversion of colonisation. Germans, who settle in Russia, above all far inland, are lost completely to the Fatherland, both politically and commercially. But in the Balkan Peninsula they strengthen the anti-Russian feeling, they enlarge German trade with Turkey and they provide elements of support should ever Germany wage war with Russia in that quarter.

In Asia Minor the movement may even become fraught with political significance in the future. The Germans are now building a line destined some day to carry the locomotive from the Bosphorus to the Persian Gulf. It is almost as

cheap and easy for the German colonist to go from the Fatherland to Constantinople as to Odessa, Kharkoff or Taganrog. Once across the Bosphorus he has not far to go before finding suitable settling places along the course of the new railway, and before long he may be expected to make his way to them. In that case, the influx of Germans into the Mediterranean end of Asia Minor might establish a counterpoise to the flow of Russians across the Caucasus to Kars and Ardahan. It will be interesting to watch if this influx will take place. If it does the anger of Russia will be tenfold to what it is now; for of all modern bogeys there is none that worries the ardent Russian patriot more than the fear that the Germans will some day be masters of Constantinople. The fear I believe to be illusory, but it is keen enough to make Russians regard Constantinople as being more under the wing of Berlin than under that of London. We English now-a-days are considered to take only a limited interest in the Turkish capital. We are no longer credited with designs on the Dardanelles, as was formerly a fixed Russian belief. Hard facts have convinced us that Russia's road to India lies through Herat not viâ Constantinople. On the other hand, the Germans are credited with the deliberate design of becoming the heirs to the sick man, and Slavophils lash themselves into a fury when casual events appear to point to the ultimate success of German policy in Turkey. If they reflected they would observe that the material growth of Russia round the rim of the Black Sea from Odessa to Batoum is far more rapid than the material growth of the rest of the region, and that this alone must qualify her, irrespective of the growth of military and naval armaments, to make the position of any foreign power attempting to hold Constantinople decidedly uncomfortable. No, a Southern Slav confederacy, embracing much of Austria, might secure the reversion of Constantinople, but not the Berlin German. The feeling between the Slav and Teuton races is too bitter to allow of this.

TURKEY'S TURN NEXT.

LONDON, *September 19th, 1890.*

EVENTS appear to be rapidly tending to a fresh disruption of Turkey. Europe has done her best, pending the consideration of other problems, to keep down restlessness in that empire; but it is now becoming generally rampant. What is worse, Europe is beginning to take note of it, and in a sense unfavourable to the Turks. The fierce light of publicity is being turned upon the dark

places of the Ottoman Empire. Districts hitherto left with remorseless indifference, a cruel prey to oppression and cruelty, are being visited by vigilant Europeans, and described with a result in revelations distinctly unfavourable to the Turks. The *Daily News*, scenting carrion already months ago, has done its best to stir up public feeling by imitating its Bulgarian exploit and sending a special correspondent into Armenia. There are few places in Turkey that will stand the light of a high-pitched civilisation, and, like Russia, the "further from Sultan, the more distant from God." Even under ordinary circumstances the correspondent would have experienced no difficulty in collecting tales of oppression and cruelty. Every traveller who has traversed Asia Minor has had plenty to record, whether a century ago are only last summer. The present restlessness, making the local authorities harsher, has doubled the tales of oppression and cruelty, and the correspondent, instructed no doubt by the *Daily News* to show up the Turks in the most vivid colours, has furnished his paper with a harvest of sensational telegrams. If these have not excited public feeling like the famous ones of the Bulgarian atrocity epoch, they have certainly impressed the public mind with the feeling that things are in a bad way in Turkey. Even the steady old *Times*, which might have been supposed to have nourished the conviction that the *Daily News* was only publishing the intelligence from Armenia for selfish party reasons, has so far yielded to the public sentiment that it has actually despatched a special correspondent to Constantinople to investigate the real condition of Turkish affairs.

More prominence will thus be given to the rottenness of Turkey; and the *Times* is gravely mistaken when it assumes, as it does this morning, that, however bad the condition of Armenia may become, the occupation of the country by any European Power is the last thing that will happen. Europe has hitherto closed its eyes to Turkish misrule, because it has been otherwise occupied. Its attention, however, is now less distracted, and there is every likelihood that we shall hear a good deal of the Turkish question during the coming winter. Meanwhile there is no cessation to the rotting of Turkey within and without. The more the Turks become discredited in European estimation, the more the Russians are encouraged to encompass their destruction. This is essentially the danger of the hour. On the Continent the Turks long ago lost their reputation. In England alone has there remained any sentiment in their favour. Thirteen years ago this feeling was all-powerful in this country. Despite the Bulgarian atrocities, the close of the war found it still pretty strong. It is no exaggeration to say that if the sickness of Turkey had been at all

curable, and the Turks had possessed any leaders to cure it, the Sultan might have traded to any extent upon the friendship of England in 1878. Even since then there has been more than once a strong spasmodic feeling in favour of Turkey. The general tendency, however, has been to abandon the Turks to their fate in disappointment and disgust, and the letters in the *Daily News* and the *Times* cannot but accelerate the drifting apart of the two Governments. The conviction has already become pretty well grounded in this country, that it is not simply hopeless, but absolutely useless to fight for the Turks. The country is incessantly rotting in time of peace; and no matter how brilliantly we come out of a conflict with Russia for its defence, the rotting would continue at the same pace afterwards.

On the last occasion that Turkey was invaded our interference undoubtedly saved the country from total destruction. It is the fashion to somewhat deride what the Earl of Beaconsfield did in 1878, and to assume that the Russians were but slightly influenced by our expressed resolve to defend Constantinople. As a matter-of-fact, Russia was very seriously impressed by our intervention. She had a higher opinion of our army then than she has had since we added Maiwand, Isandula, Laing's Nek, Majuba Hill and Khartoum to its list of disgraces, and recoiled from a fresh campaign, which would have brought down upon her the forces of India as well as the English troops at home. Unable as she was to get at England or India, she would have exposed herself to the full brunt of an English attack on her forces at Constantinople, with her army distant a thousand miles from home, and its Black Sea communications in English hands. She therefore submitted to a revision of the Treaty of Stefano and abandoned her designs upon Constantinople itself. Without firing a shot England imposed a restraint upon Russia which has been repeatedly acknowledged by the chief authorities in Russia since, although they have in most cases expressed their surprise and disgust that they should have submitted to it.

No such restraint exists to-day. Russia occupies an overwhelming position on the rim of Armenia. The barrier between her and India she has broken down to such an extent that were war to break out between her and England to-morrow, the Indian army would be tied to India for its defence, and we should further have to send some of our home troops to defend it. The force that would be left available for the despatch of an expedition to Turkey to defend Armenia would be so inferior in numbers to the Russian invading army that no English statesman would dare to make use of it for that purpose. All this is thoroughly understood in Russia, where the military outlook is treated as altogether in her favour. With regard to the political aspect, little can be

pointed out to our advantage. We cannot make the Turks rule Armenia better if they refuse to do so, and we cannot occupy the province ourselves. We cannot do this because, in the first place, the Turks would object; in the second Russia would not allow us; and in the third, the bulk of English opinion would be against a repetition of the Egyptian occupation with all its trouble and expense and the chances of innumerable embroglios with the frontier tribes of Turkey, Persia and Russia.

But because we cannot actively interfere and ameliorate the lot of Armenia, it does not necessarily follow that Turkey and England can, by diplomatic means, preserve indefinitely the *status quo*. The *Times*, which is never happy when it is not nagging, chides the Armenians for agitating and appealing to Europe for redress. It would have them apparently sit still and submit to be robbed and dishonoured by the Turks. This policy may be all very well for a man in slippers and dressing-gown, writing his leading article at home after a comfortable breakfast, in security and ease; but it is childish to expect the people of Armenia to submit to it. The *Times*' man himself would probably howl louder than any Armenian if his house were plundered and his wife and daughters subjected to dishonour. And now that, after years of suffering, the people of Armenia have got the ear of Europe, they cannot be blamed for making the most of their complaints. The danger of this is that, England, as well as Europe, disgusted with the Turks, may be carried away by a passing emotion and acquiesce in a Russian occupation of Armenia. If Russia sees her chance of profiting by such a spasm of feeling she will certainly avail herself of it.

England's commercial and political interests in Asia Minor are as important to-day as they were when the Anglo-Turkish Convention was signed. The public, however, are profoundly indifferent to them. So general is the distrust of Turkey, that I question whether it would be possible to float any Turkish enterprise in this country just now. A short time ago there was a slight tendency to touch Turkish investments, but it has been speedily quenched by the opposite feeling. During this brief period concessions were obtained by means of the usual amount of *backshish*, which, in view of the public distrust, are now practically worthless. None of these, however, were for the Armenian district, which is left neglected and undeveloped. Meanwhile Russia's expansion in the Caucasus proceeds amain, and every day the material forces on one side of the frontier wax stronger, while those on the other become proportionately weaker. If Russia is destined to be the Sultan's successor in Armenia, it is because her material growth is qualifying her for the post.

WILL RUSSIA BE SQUARED WITH ARMENIA?

LONDON, *August 28th, 1890.*

RUSSIANS are waiting with interest for the business results of the Kaiser's visit to Alexander III. The Kaiser is not a man given to pleasure, nor yet Prince Bismarck's successor, General Caprivi. The two have not visited Russia for nothing, and the conundrum to solve is—what has been the aim of their journey? The answer of the Russians is that Russia in turn is to receive her portion of the world's territorial spoils now being shared by Europe, Germany and England; Portugal, France, and Italy have each of them received large slices of valuable African territory—what is Russia to receive? Of Africa there is little that is left worth having. The Western powers of Europe have appropriated most of the seaboard, and annexed on map the Dark Interior. During the partition Russia has made no sign, but she has not refrained from thinking. Years ago she had serious designs of establishing a hold upon some portion of the Red Sea. It was a toss up whether she or Italy would share the region with England and France. One has only to refer to the work on Egypt, written by Professor Martens, of the Russian Foreign Office, in 1883, to see how keenly Russia coveted a foothold in that quarter. Fortunately she either delayed her seizure of a port too long, or was firmly held in check by the diplomacy of the Western powers. Italy—thanks to Signor Crispi and the encouragement of England—stepped into the vacant places that neither England nor France could take without mortally offending one another, and Russia lost her chance of becoming an African power. The volunteer raid of Ashinoff showed, when too late, how much she would have liked to have become the protector of Abyssinia; and although since that fiasco she has refrained from any further attempts to establish a footing in Africa, she has watched with envy and jealousy the rapid absorption of territory by Italy and other powers. Among themselves they have partitioned the African Continent without taking Russia in the least into account. After assailing and insulting Russia for years for her earth-hunger in Asia, they have quietly annexed vast areas of rich and fertile territory compared with which the deserts and oases of Turkistan are as copper contrasted with gold.

England, France, and Germany having had their fill, what is Russia to have? If France had a right to exact a *quid pro quo* for

the settlement of Zanzibar, Russia in turn has also a claim, and in her hands claims however shadowy at first, have a tendency to assume a very materialistic character. So far as England is concerned, I do not think Russia is at all jealous of her growth on the Zambesi; but Russia certainly is dissatisfied at the rapid acquisition of a colonial empire by Germany. Whatever tends to increase German power in Europe tends to weaken Russian influence; for with all our opposition to Russian expansion in Turkey, Persia, and Central Asia, Russia rightly regards Germany as her most dangerous enemy and rival. If the sight of the German town of Narva, groaning under the Russian yoke, may have excited the secret anguish of the Kaiser last week, he cannot but have been soothed and comforted by the reflection that, within the last twenty years, Germany has upset the naval predominance of Russia in the Baltic, established by Peter the Great, and that the means are rapidly growing whereby she may yet wrest from Russia the old Teutonic shore-line up to St. Petersburg before the end of the present century. No such bone of contention as the Baltic lies between England and Russia. We may do our hardest to stem the eastward advance of Russia, but we do not hanker after a single acre of her territory. We are rivals, but we are not enemies. Quite the contrary is the case with Russia and Germany. The Germans do not like to see a fragment of their race inhabiting Riga, Rival, Narva, and other well-known Baltic ports doing obedience to the Tzar; and the Russians on their part are annoyed at the posibility of being excluded once more, by some untoward event, from the Baltic and the Northern Sea from an opening into Europe which has been theirs from a time when Prussia was an insignificant duchy. "We helped you to grow; but for us you would have been squelched by Austria and France over and over again" is the reproachful reminder of Russians to the statesmen of Prussia; and they consider it extremely unkind that Germany, now she is strong, should nourish any designs upon provinces which are absolutely essential to the welfare of Russia, and in which after all the German population is by a long way in the minority.

The joy manifested by the Kaiser, however, over the acquisition of the few "tater" fields of Heligoland, because the island was looked upon as German, indicates the keen desire of Germany to recover all stray portions of the Fatherland. The case of the Baltic provinces is worse than that of Heligoland. The islanders had no complaint to make against the home rule we tolerated; and there were only a few symbols of sovereignty to remind the patriotic German tourist that he was residing on British soil. In the Baltic provinces of Russia the aspect is very different. The German from Berlin cannot pass a day at Riga, Reval, and Narva without having

ample evidence that the local German population is groaning under a foreign yoke. Wherever he comes into contact with officialdom, from registering his passport to purchasing a postage stamp, he is reminded that his language is under a ban, and is insulted if he insists on using it. On all sides he hears his brother Germans complaining of the persecution in vogue; and, if a Lutheran, his religious passions are aroused by stories of inoffensive pastors languishing in prison, or sent to exile in Siberia, for insisting on preaching in German instead of a language they do not understand. In spite, therefore, of all Court flummery, the visit of the Kaiser to the Baltic provinces has not been without a certain amount of pain to the former. Events however are not ripe for the recovery of Riga and Reval; and in the meanwhile, in order to neutralise France, it is better for Germany to pretend to entertain a friendly feeling towards Russia. This was always the policy of Prince Bismarck, who never refused to gratify Russia's whims, and assist her in aggressive designs so long as they did not touch German interests. Consequently, were the Tzar to occupy Erzeroum as a territorial set-off against the recent European annexations in Africa, Germany would probably not only not refuse consent but would even afford her diplomatic support simply to keep matters quiet in Europe so far as they concern herself. The Tzar has a grievance against Germany for siding with Austria and preventing Russian intervention in Bulgarian affairs during the last few years. This grievance Germany cannot directly remove; but she could indirectly assist Russia in salving her wounded self-love, and recovering her prestige, by winking at a Russian occupation of Armenia. Such an enterprise would take the Russian pressure off the Austro-German frontier and keep England quiet while Germany consolidated her annexations in Africa.

And a "swopping" policy being the humour of the hour in Downing-street, it is by no means impossible that Lord Salisbury, under diplomatic pressure, might even consent to the occupation of Armenia, within certain definite limits, rather than risk a costly war. For Turkey not a bit of sympathy any longer prevails in this country. It is agreed upon by all parties that she must speedily die; and there is a general wish that she should do so as comfortably as possible. In spite of our great Asiatic interests no English statesman seems disposed to recommend the pacification of Armenia by the despatch of an English force to Erzeroum; while it is admitted that the misrule in Armenia ought not to be tolerated much longer. Russia, if she persecutes Germans in the Baltic region, knows how to conciliate the Armenians in the Caucasus; and since Europe will not take steps to establish an independent Armenian State, they are ready and anxious that Russia should annex

the country. Until recently Russia studiously repressed all agitation in the Caucasus for annexing Armenia. Turkey on her part kept the frontier quiet. Whether the present ebullition of the Armenian population is solely due to the slackening of Turkish control over the Kurds, or whether Russia has been deliberately, though secretly, fomenting discord, with a view to the occupation of the province, it is difficult to say. The fact remains that if Russia wants a pretext for occupying Armenia, a good one lies ready at hand; and in the present mood of Europe she might even get it without any armed opposition on the part of Turkey, who is quite aware that Russia is the predominant naval power in the Black Sea, and, while blockading the Bosphorus, could lop off the Erzeroum province without any hope of Turkey being able to prevent it on land. England, with her squeezable statesmen, would of course yield to the pressure of events.



PART IV.

RUSSIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

RUSSIAN ORTHODOXY AND A RELIGIOUS TZAR.

LONDON, *August 10th, 1888.*

AT first sight there would appear little in the Russian festivities in connection with the celebration of the 900th anniversary of the introduction of Christianity into Russia to interest either India or England; and, so far as the latter is concerned, scarcely anything at all has been published on the subject. And yet there must be something in the religious progress of 100 millions of of Christian Russians to furnish food for reflection. For the first time for centuries a really pious Tzar occupies the throne. Speaking generally, the sovereigns of Russia, with the exception, perhaps, of the Autocrat Nicholas, have been, from a moral point of view, a bad lot. The lives of most of them have been written in blood, and their relations with women would furnish a fine theme for the Puritan editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, were not Mr. Stead a rabid advocate of everything Russian. The present Emperor takes after the Grand Duke Vladimir, who introduced Christianity into Russia 900 years ago, rather than the sovereigns who have occupied the throne since Peter the Great. He is a good husband, a kind father, and an excellent family man. In every respect he is a model of purity to his court, and although love intrigues may be carried on behind his back, the game is a very dangerous one, and is apt to get the culprit into disgrace. The last reign was a reign of free love, and St. Petersburg was one of the gayest cities in Europe. To-day, unfortunates hardly dare to show themselves on the streets, all the gay houses inside the city have been closed, and only a few are tolerated in the suburbs. That the people of St. Petersburg are more moral is questionable; indeed figures are against it, the total of foundlings received at the Foundling Hospital last year (amounting to some thousands) being the largest on record. Still, vice outwardly is not so rampant, and it is possible for a girl to walk along the Nevsky after dark without being molested—a thing impossible under the *régime* of Alexander II., and still impossible in Regent-street and the Strand. I had occasion during my winter stay at St. Petersburg to traverse the Nevsky almost nightly for nearly three months, and was struck with the Puritan stillness that prevailed. Outwardly St. Petersburg is completely changed; the Police-master, General Gresser, does his utmost to carry out the moral sentiments

of his master. The reform, however, does not extend beyond the capital. Troops of unfortunates still parade the streets of Moscow day and night, and in one quarter vice is allowed to rear its head with an effrontery hardly equalled elsewhere in Europe.

The Tzar is not only a good family man, loving his wife with an affection surprising, considering the circumstances under which they were married; but, like Mr. Gladstone, he is fond of attending church, and next to his favourite relaxation of chopping wood, enjoys nothing better than to listen to the chapel choir. If the religious bent of Mr. Gladstone's mind "takes" with certain classes in England, so also does the piety of the present Tzar endear him to the majority of his subjects. The popularity of Alexander III. in this respect, indeed, is infinitely greater than that of Mr. Gladstone; because while the latter is not the favourite of churchmen owing to his attacks upon the Anglican Church, and impresses by his religious fervour only the Nonconformists, the former is the champion of the Russo-Greek Church, and the staunch defender of its interests at home and abroad, and a firm believer in the doctrine that makes him the representative of the Almighty in directing its destinies on earth. The Tzar, most people already know, although I do not see why most people should treat it as a defect or crime, is intensely national, and this feeling influences the church as well as everything else. The late Emperor concerned himself very little about religious matters; with the present one they are part and parcel of his daily existence. It is notorious, indeed, that the Procureur of the Holy Synod, Pobiedonostseff, while carrying out a national policy in regard to the church, manages to "put his spoke" in politics also. When Alexander II. conquered Turkistan, he subordinated church affairs to political needs by not only allowing the *mollahs* to convert the heathen Kirghiz to the Mussulman faith, but went out of his way to build them mosques also. The aim, of course, was to conciliate the Mahomedans in Central Asia. The present Emperor will tolerate nothing of that sort. Recently a batch of popes were sent to convert the Tekke Turkomans of Akhal and Merv to the Russo-Greek faith, and missionaries are to be sent in the autumn to Khiva and Bokhara. It is not believed that pressure will be used to convert the natives; but for the future the primary religion in Central Asia will be the Russo-Greek, and the Mahomedans, in spite of their fanaticism, will have "to take back seat."

More significant, however, is the attitude of the Russian Government towards the Lutheran faith. At the recent Lambeth conference it was decided to initiate measures for bringing about a closer union between the Anglican and the Northern churches of Europe. Had Dean Stanley been alive, he would have probably

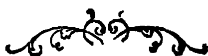
included Russia in the category. The fad, however, of bringing about a union between the Anglican and the Russo-Greek churches has died away. There was never much vitality in the idea. Although in certain doctrines the two churches may approach one another closely, in practice they are as wide apart as the Papal Church from Mormonism. The Russians never favoured the idea very much, but they certainly did a decade or two ago regard the Lutheran Church with more tenderness than they could ever feel with respect to other branches of religious worship. This is no longer the case. The conflict with the Germans in the Baltic Provinces has provoked an estrangement between the Russo-Greek and Protestant religions. The popes look upon the German pastors of Riga and Revel as Jesuits, and the persecuted pastors have imitated Luther in resisting the decrees of the Russian Government in a manner that has led to already 30 or 40 being sent into exile. Under Alexander II the Lutheran pastors were allowed, if not encouraged, to make converts among the Esthonians and other broken races of the Baltic Provinces. Now conversion is permitted only to the orthodox church, and the Lutheran pastors who makes a proselyte is promptly put in prison. During the last few years more than a score of Russo-Greek churches have been erected in the Baltic Provinces, and cathedrals at Riga, Revel, and Narva. Hardly a week passes without the wholesale conversion of Esthonians—sometimes half-a-dozen villages at a stroke—being recorded. Long-haired popes pervade the country, and conflicts between them and the Lutheran pastors are of frequent occurrence. The circulation of the German Bible by the British and American Bible Societies is forbidden; and after the end of this year the Lutheran pastors will have to read from the Russian Bible. Considering that the majority of the pastors, in common with their flocks, are ignorant of the Russian language, this law is indeed a persecuting measure. However, the Tzar has committed himself to a bitter conflict with the Lutherans, and there is very little chance of the law being abrogated—certainly not while Pobiedonostseff exercises predominant influence. Your readers may remember the snub he recently administered to certain foreign Protestant bodies who addressed him with reference to mitigating this persecution. As plainly as possible, he declared that the Russian Government intended to stand no nonsense from non-orthodox faiths, and the latter would have to submit to the decrees of the Synod, whatever they might be.

This intolerant attitude has been ascribed to be simply due to political animosity against the Germans, but this is not the case. During the late Emperorss reign there was a grievous falling off from orthodoxy. Whole districts abandoned themselves to Dissent.

Innumerable sects sprung up everywhere, and one of them, Stundism, numbered tens of thusands of followers. Now Stundists, or Russian Baptists, have much in common with the religious practices of Lutherans. If Stundism was not actually Protestantism, it was next door to it. Certainly it was closer to it than many branches of Nonconformists are to the Anglican Church. Alexander II. did little to check the movement, notwithstanding that the Stundists, besides rejecting the popes questioned the divine attributes ascribed by orthodoxy to the Tzar. The adoption of these independent views by entire *zemstvos* was regarded as a matter of course, or tolerated because the Emperor had enough to do to put down political heresy without involving himself in religious war. Here again the present Tzar has adopted a totally different policy. Dissenters generally are having a very bad time of it in Russia just now, and next to being a Nihilist, there is no worse crime than to add to the numbers of a sect. Those who are already Stundists have to submit to attempts of missionaries to convert them back to the church, attendance at the meetings organised by the popes in the dissenting districts being compulsory, and woe betide the man who responds too readily to the invitation to join in the discussion. If he prove too tough an antagonist, he is a marked man, and soon has a journey gratis provided for him to Siberia, or the Caucasus, the latter being a favourite place of exile for Dissenters. Since the present Emperor ascended the throne, probably some hundreds of the leading Dissenters of Russia have been sent into exile for life. Ten or twenty years' exile for "perverting a soul from othodoxy" is a very common punishment. Perhaps it is because the punishment is so common that the Rev. T. Lansdel has never deigned to notice it.

The growth of Dissent is certainly one of the chief reasons why the Russian Government is so ill-disposed just now towards Lutheranism. It no more believes in freedom of thought in religious matters than it does in politics. A man who is born orthodox must die orthodox under pain of imprisonment or exile. It may be remembered that a few years ago, when the Russian Government wished to put down at a stroke the flickering feeling in favour of Free Trade, it suddenly one morning sent the police to all the libraries and bookshops in the Empire, and every book on Free Trade was seized and destroyed. The rising generation of Russia is now growing up ignorant of Free Trade beyond what it may occasionally gather from the foreign press ; and to own a copy of Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations" is to render one's self liable to six months' imprisonment. This is the sort of policy that it is also pursuing towards non-orthodox literature. As nature abhors a vacuum, it is endeavouring to fill the gap with a host of orthodox publications, many of which would have

provided rare materials for the author of the Ingoldsby Legends had they been extant in his time. The childishness of some of those productions is so amazing that, when I read some of the latest in the publishing department of the Holy Synod in February, I rubbed my eyes and asked myself whether I was not living in the time of the blessed Saint Vladimir nine centuries ago, instead of in the present year of grace. I say this without any disrespect for a church, for which, in general, I have a good deal of sympathy. When I first went into the interior of Russia, a lad, and could not eat the black bread, the pope of the village—for whom I have still high esteem—used to send me daily communion bread from the church, and this is by no means the only act of kindness I have received at the hands of the ecclesiastics of Russia. Many of them share my view that the present tendencies of the Synod are not calculated to do the church good, but to harm it. Since Pobiedostseff became all-powerful, there has been a cessation to that movement of progress inside the church which seemed likely to put a stop to Dissent in a more permanent manner than the present policy. Still, as this policy is accompanied by Count Tolstoi's policy for curtailing education among the masses, by confining public instruction to children of the upper grades, it may be attended with success for a time, and even lead to what is believed to be likely to become a feature of the future, namely, a development on a large scale of the missionary movement. Up to now Russia has done little in this line, beyond establishing a mission in Japan and converting the aborginal races of Siberia to Christianity; but the operations against the Stundists, the attacks on the Lutherans in the Baltic Provinces, and the despatch of missionaries to Central Asia collectively constitute a movement that may lead to crusades in unexpected directions. When Tzar, Government, and people are stimulated by such anniversaries as that of the introduction of Christianity into Russia to imitate the exploits of Saint Vladimir, it is impolitic to disregard the display of fanaticism that has revealed itself in several respects in connection with the celebration at Kieff. Vladimir simply told his subjects to become Christians, and they obeyed. From this the moral is deduced that had succeeding rulers of Russia been firmer with subject races, there would have been religious uniformity prevailing throughout the Empire to-day. This is not merely a hint for the Lutheran Germans, but for the Mussulman Tartars, &c., as well. The *Moscow Gazette* thinks little difficulty will be experienced in making Russo-Greeks of all the Turkomans, as they are not thorough Mahomedans. It will be interesting to watch the experiment at Askabad and Merv.



BARTER IN TRADE AND POLITICS.

LONDON, *August 24th, 1888.*

THREE circumstances—the visit of Signor Crispi to Prince Bismarck, the reported outbreak in Afghan-Turkistan, and the publication of Sir Robert Morier's despatch on opening up a sea trade with Siberia—have provoked this week wide and incessant discussion of the possibilities of peace and war in Europe. Early in the week the concession to Captain Wiggins to trade, tariff-free, with Siberia for five years, was rashly accepted as an indication that Russia was anxious to enter into friendly relations with us. The echoes of the congratulations of the few pro-Russian papers had hardly died away when the telegrams from India of a rising in Afghan-Turkistan against the Amir started afresh a flood of hostile criticism against Russia and her heathen ways. The first event was altogether exaggerated, although the *Pall Mall Gazette* did not stand alone in its erroneous deductions from it. Mr. Stead recently paid a two or three weeks' visit to St. Petersburg, and imagined that he has got up Russian politics in a manner that will enable him for the future to knock every Russophobe into a cocked hat. Your readers are probably acquainted with the tourist who visits two or three Indian ports in the course of a homeward trip, and considers himself an expert in Indian affairs ever afterwards. I remember the case of a dissenting minister who once came with a letter of introduction to me at St. Petersburg. He had been given a free ticket by Mr. Wilson, of the Wilson Line, and stayed four days at St. Petersburg, during which he cruised very little about, being a man fond of sitting at his ease and enjoying the good things of this life, whether solid or liquid. On his way home the steamer stopped at Copenhagen for a few hours to coal. When winter came round, the district in which he ministered was well placarded with posters announcing that on such and such a date the Rev.———would deliver an illustrated lecture on his "travels in the Baltic, Scandinavia, and the Russian Empire, including a descriptive account of life and manners in Stockholm, Copenhagen, St. Petersburg, Moscow, Nijni Novgorod, Warsaw, and Odessa." Mr. Stead reminds me of this minister. He has had a few chats with a few Russian officials, and fancies he has brought home the entire policy of the whole Russian Empire in his pocket-book. To the average Russian his articles on the politics of the country must revive recollections of the funny parts of the diary of the Shah of Persia. Mr. Stead is perhaps a little more in earnest than Nassr-ed-din; but as this earnestness is expended more in propagating

afresh old ideas than in imparting new information, it does not add much to the value of his remarks.

One of the notions Mr. Stead revives is that if we were friends with Russia commercial reciprocity would ensue between the two countries and both hereafter would be everlastingly embracing each other in business. While in Russia he met Count Ignatieff, who rather encouraged the idea, although I do not believe he went as far as Mr. Stead makes out. And then the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* quotes this choice statement from "an English resident in the East" (or perhaps in Earlswood) who used these words:—'The Russian peasant cannot feed the London artisan, nor can the Sheffield cutlers sell their knives to the Russian moujik—because why? Because a set of God-forsaken wretches with pens in their hands, in St. Petersburg and in London, keep on day after day gibing at each other, maligning each other, and imputing all manner of evil against England and Russia, until on each side it begins to be believed that their first duty to each other is not to exchange products for manufactures, and establish good relations based upon mutual interchange of surplus commodities, but to exchange insults and to prepare to interchange shots. This has a pretty, Cobden prize-like appearance, but it is a statement that will not wash. From beginning to end it is simply what the irreverent of speech call "rot." The commercial policy of Russia has nothing whatever to do with politics. Speaking subject to correction, I cannot call to mind a single instance during the past twenty years where the Russian tariff has been altered against England because of the hostile feelings subsisting between the two countries. Every change in the Russian tariff is always discussed, and mostly well discussed, beforehand; and in excess the Minister of Finance always explains elaborately in the official press the reasons causing him to make the alteration, so that it is easy to correct me if I am wrong. In the course of my Russian reading—and for many years now I have read the Russian papers daily as regularly as I have read the English—I have never seen even a non-official, let alone a semi-official, print advocate that Russia should oppose our political hostility with her tariff, nor yet point out that the weapon has ever been used. Yet here is Mr. Stead pretending that the warfare between the English and Russian press is the cause of the heavy duties on English manufactures current in Russia, and without the slightest basis of truth in his assertion, putting it forward, in the lingo of "an English gentleman resident in the East," as an absolute fact.

After this, it is not surprising to find the *Pall Mall Gazette* referring to Captain Wiggins' enterprise as "opening the door to El Dorado, and paving the way to a great trade, if England will only

pursue a more neighbourly policy towards Russia." In other words, we are to give up Constantinople for the right to export gold-crushing machinery, duty-free, to Siberia for a few years. Not a very good bargain this, but the *Pall Mall Gazette*, like Professor Baldwin, revels in being up in the clouds. In the first place, the extraction of gold languishes in Siberia, not because it has been impossible to convey heavy machinery to the mines—plenty of equally heavy machinery is constantly being hauled over Siberian roads—but because in Ural Siberia the industry is so fettered by redtape and corruption that Russians refuse to embark their time and money in the enterprise ; while in Pacific Siberia, where gold is ten times more plentiful, the Government has purposely gagged the industry to prevent a gold rush to the Amoor. For years the Russian authorities have been in fear of a rush of American diggers to the Amoor region, followed by the possible hoisting of the stars and stripes ; and to prevent this occurring, gold mining in the Amoor territory is placed under onerous restrictions, and no foreigners are allowed to hold or be ever employed in the mines. Such being the case, the opening up of a sea trade with the Siberian rivers will really exercise no more influence on the Russian gold industry than the discovery of Stanley in Africa upon the price of ghee in Allahabad.

Respecting Captain Wiggins' concession I wish to say as little as possible. Captain Wiggins is a supremely plucky seaman, who has worked so hard on behalf of the Siberian sea trade with so little encouragement from England or England's merchants, that if he can manage to make a little pile in five years, no one will be more delighted than myself. It was Wiggins who first pointed out the path to Nordenskjold ; and had the Sunderland navigator been as well supported as the Scandinavian, the honour of discovering the sea passage along North Siberia to the ocean would have fallen to this country. After years and years of disappointments and rebuffs borne with admirable patience, Captain Wiggins has at length had the good luck to find in Sir Robert Morier an Ambassador willing to do his utmost on behalf of British trade. Perhaps there is a personal element in the matter, as Sir Robert Morier's son has joined the "adventurers," and is to accompany Captain Wiggins on his first voyage this season ; but, at any rate, Captain Wiggins has secured a start, and I sincerely hope he and those who help him will get plenty of profit out of their five years' operations, whatever the ultimate future of the trade. Regarding that, I do not believe it will be very important, for the simple reason that the moment it assumes any proportions, Russia will crush it with her tariff. Mr. Stead speaks of "reciprocity in commerce being in favour in high

places" in Russia just now. This is nonsense. Count Ignatieff may believe in reciprocity, because the Count is a very clever Minister of broad liberal views, whose excellent *regime* as Minister of the Interior is still regretted by many Russians; but he has no influence at all just now, and can no more affect Russian trade policy by his opinions than the President of the Fair Trade League can alter the course of commercial policy in this country.

The fact of the matter is that Russia, at the present moment, is as rapidly protectionist as the members of the Cobden Club are rapidly devoted to free trade. People in high places, as well as people in low, are convinced that steady adherence to protection can alone save Russia. It is not simply that free trade is unpopular with this or the other Finance Minister; it is unpopular in society altogether. The causes of this are not difficult to seek. Russia is pre-eminently an agricultural country. At one time her prosperity depended entirely upon the agricultural and pastoral pursuits of her population. Those were the good old times when gold imperials were as common as blackberries, and the people knew not the pains of paper money, the silver rouble being worth the good round sum of three-and-six. Then came the change from wood to iron, with the corresponding revolution in the products required for mankind, and followed by the rapid rise of competition on the part of the colonies established by England abroad. Russian tallow yielded to Australian fat, Russian wool was undersold by Cape fleeces, Russian hemp by Indian jute, and Russian timber by wood from Canada. Finally, America and India in succession attacked with success Russian corn in the markets of Europe, and left her without a product to rest upon except petroleum While this transformation was in progress, there was a period when Russia, notable in the sixties, was strongly tempted to go in for free trade. Her tariff then was quite a mild one compared with that in force to-day. In Moscow, Katkoff was an ardent advocate of reciprocity; and in St. Petersburg, Kraevsky, one of the best journalists Russia ever had, supported the idea in the *Golos*. The fit, however, did not last long. The rapid growth of American competition in the corn trade provoked a general fear that if Russia relied too much on her field products she might be ruined, and appeals became urgent that everything should be done to stimulate manufactures at home. Katkoff was one of the first to throw over free, and the rest of the press soon followed his example. The re-action reached a culminating point a few years ago when policemen went round to all the libraries and removed every book describing or supporting free trade. To-day free trade is regarded by the Russian Government as poison; and he who

surreptitiously reads or conceals on his premises a copy of Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations" is liable to six months' imprisonment as a common felon. This is what the *Pall Mall Gazette* calls "reciprocity being in high places." Mr. Stead's eyes would have been opened had he tried to smuggle a copy of Adam Smith in Russ across the frontier.

"The Russian peasant cannot feed the London artisan, nor can the Sheffield cutlers sell their knives to the Russian moujik," not because newspapers wrangle, but because Russia wishes the Russian peasant to feed the Russian artisan, and the Russian cutler to sell knives to the Russian moujik. Russia is most anxious to sell her produce; but she wants cash for it, not manufactures. Mr. Stead's dream of Russia, being content to grow corn for the English artisan, and receive in return without duty the goods manufactured at Birmingham and Sheffield, is a very pretty one; but it is a mere vision—nothing more. Russia's desire to become a great manufacturing power is stronger, I believe, than her desire to possess Constantinople, and, at any rate, shows itself more frequently. Every few months the tariff is carefully overhauled by the Government, and any import which begins to expand too freely is quickly subjected to a new duty. Sometimes quite a tariff war exists between Russia and Germany, and retaliatory measures of the two trade rivals get mixed with politics in discussions; but we escape all that. Russia may tax our goods as much as she likes, and even suppress branches of English business at a stroke; but we never retaliate, and hence a tariff war between the two countries is impossible. All that Russia thinks about when she alters her tariff against us is to improve her commercial position, and the political factor never interferes with the matter at all. A striking instance is coal—curiously an article which Mr. Stead selects as one which Russia might allow to enter duty-free in return for Russian corn if "we pursued a more neighbourly policy," or, in plainer terms, if we handed over Asia Minor with Constantinople to Russia. Formerly English coal was imported into Russia duty-free. This was allowed, not out of tenderness for England, then under Mr. Gladstone's control, but because the consumption of English coal saved Russia's forest (and Russia is very anxious to preserve her timber supply), and because the only large coal deposits were situated out of the reach of steamers and railways. The moment, however, the railway system penetrated to the Donetz region, and ramifications began to spread from that great carboniferous area to the southern parts, Russia found, of course, that English coal competed with the native article, and imposed a small duty upon all that entered the Black Sea. The duty was purposely a low one, because the littoral

provinces contain no fuel ; and hence the railways and factories, until the native supply was large enough, depended upon the coal mines of England. In the Baltic, to which it was impossible to send a large supply of cheap Russian coal, no duty at all was imposed. After a while the duty in the Black Sea was again raised, and then a third time ; and the native supply being now considered powerful enough to meet Russia's southern wants, the duty was made so prohibitive that England's trade in coal in the Black Sea—ranging between two and three million tons yearly—almost entirely ceased. At the same time sufficient means of intercourse with the Baltic had been established to allow of Russian coal being sold at St. Petersburg; hence a small duty was also imposed on coal coming to Cronstadt. Recently, owing to the Donetz pits having become flooded in the spring, there was a dearth of coal in South Russia and a "crisis" took place in the trade ; but this is only temporary, and in a year or two Russia will produce every bit of coal she requires, and aspires even to export it from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. Already she exports a little from her Vistula mines to Germany. Such being the case, if Mr. Stead's idea were carried out and we surrendered Constantinople for the right to export coal to Russia duty-free one of two things would occur—either English coal would smash up the Russian coal trade, which I am sure Russia would never allow, since it is now too important, or else Russia, being well supplied with a cheap home-supply, would require no English coal at all. Most likely the latter would be the case.

ASIATIC NOTES.

LONDON, *September 14th, 1888.*

THE small value I attached to the concession granted to Captain Wiggins is borne out by a perusal of the official decree. The concession proves to be no concession at all in the sense that company promoters in London make use of the term. Free trade, *but only in certain articles,* is allowed in the Obi river for one year, and in the Yenesei for five ; *but the Russian Government reserves itself the right to fix at any moment the maximum of the goods to be so inported.* In other words, whenever the foreign merchant begins to do a good business in a certain article, he will be liable at any moment to receive a telegraphic decree putting a stop to any further importation. This is very poor encouragement indeed; and if it be borne in mind that the "concession" applies to the Obi

river only one year, because the basin of that river is now tied to Russia by railway, it is open to inference that the extension of the railway system to the Yenesei system within the next five years will cause the Russian Government to refuse a renewal of the concession. I have before me the copy of a long memorial, signed by one hundred and sixty of the leading merchants of Nijni Novgorod Fair, in which they point out that, thanks to this railway extension into Siberia, Russia is quite able to supply Siberia with the articles England proposes to introduce, and urge that the Government shall do its utmost to restrict to the smallest proportions the privileges accorded to Captain Wiggins personally. I have very little doubt that this will be the case, the exaggerated estimates placed upon the value of the concession by the English press causing the newspapers of Russia to angrily demand that the trade shall be kept out of foreign hands.

Some time ago a commission appointed by the General Staff to select the starting point of the Transcaspian Railway unanimously recommended the transfer of the port from Azun Ada to Krasnovodsk. General Annenkoff, however, who would rather see money spent upon an extension from Samarkhand to Tashkent than upon the eighty miles of line from Krasnovodsk to Mulla Kari, which would be necessary if the port of Azun Ada were superseded, and who, moreover, was personally responsible for the previous transfer of the starting point from Michaelovsk to Azun Ada, opposed the recommendation; and in order to allow the matter to be discussed afresh, the Russian Government instructed circulars to be sent out, soliciting the views of steamboat companies and private merchants in regard to the question. An adjourned autumn meeting of the commission was held a few days ago to examine the replies, when it was found that nearly the whole of them were in favour of a transfer of the port to Krasnovodsk. The two leading steamboat companies in the Caspian Sea—the "Caspian and Mercury" and the "Lebed," or Swan, founded many years ago by Mr. Swan, one of the directors of Sir William Armstrong, Mitchell and Company, trading extensively with Krasnovodsk and Azun Ada, both urgently advised the immediate adoption of Krasnovodsk owing to the navigation troubles at the present terminus.

The *Novœ Vremya* of September 10th received to-day contains a two-column article on "The Russo-Persian Railway" of such a wild and gaseous character that I was convinced in glancing down it that it could only proceed from the pen of the most assinine member of the Russian press—Gospodin A. Moltchanoff. As I expected, I found his name printed at the bottom of it. The accusation in it against Sir Drummond Wolff, of offering £16,000 to the Abyssinian Cossack Ashinoff to raise a revolt in the Caucasus,

is a specimen of the charges which this sorry journalist indulges in, the point of which will be lost in Russia owing to the personal attack also made on the Russian Mission at Teheran for not properly supporting Russian trade Your readers may perhaps have seen caricatures of the swaggering special correspondent. This Moltchanoff is a realisation in the flesh of a caricature of these caricatures. There are Russian journalists and journalists—men the press of any country might be proud of, and men calculated, by their writings and their manner, to bring any newspaper into discredit. Gospodin Moltchanoff belongs to the latter category. The possessor of a smart penny-a-liner style, Suvorin, the proprietor of the *Novoe Vremya*, sent him to London as a regular London correspondent a couple of years ago. The letters he wrote home were rapid attacks upon England, full of the errors of a man who could not read or speak English, who would have been amusing but for the offensive tone throughout. At last he made a series of venomous attacks upon the Russian Embassy here, compelling the Russian Government to order him home and to publish an explanation from the Russian Embassy, in which it was pointed out that Moltchanoff had so grossly misbehaved himself that he had been expelled the society of the Embassy, and that his statements were simply the falsehoods of a furious man. Subsequently Moltchanoff went to Berlin. where he penned insulting attacks upon Germany and caused a deal of bad feeling. Thence he proceeded to poor little Finland, and wrote such scandalous attacks upon the Finns, accusing them of disloyalty and recommending the Cossacking of the country, that he was boycotted wherever he went; and on one occasion, on attending a public ball, the whole of the people quitted the dancing-rooms and insulted him to the face by leaving him in solitary possession. That such a man could be tolerated at all by Russian editors is an indication of the degraded condition into which the press has fallen of late years owing to the severe censor laws. All that can be said about the Persian article in question that, whatever its influence upon Russian Anglophobists, it represents the view of no Russian functionary, and in official circles, therefore, will possess no weight.



THE RUSSIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY AND POLICY WITH CHINA.

LONDON, *September 21st, 1888.*

ON a recent occasion I referred to the future railway across Siberia, which is destined to very materially influence the relations of England and Russia with the Chinese Empire. The idea is by no means new, although the present project is. Like the railway to Samarkhand, the Tzar decided upon it with very little preliminary discussion or investigation, and with an imperial grandeur, calculated to blast into insignificance the poor little whiff-of-wind politicians of our parochial Parliament, decreed a couple of years ago the mandate to his Ministers at the top of a despatch—"Let a railway be built across Siberia, the shortest possible," thus, in half-a-dozen words in Russ, ordering into existence, with autocratic curtness and decision, affording a fine contrast to the aimless verbosity of English Parliaments, a railway 4,000 miles long, and calculated to cost from 35 to 40 millions sterling. One cannot but admire an Emperor who rules in this truly Imperial manner. If one-man rule is to be a success now-a-days—and I hold strongly to the opinion that in any walk of life, in any country, a single man, clear-headed and resolute, is worth a host of babling committees and commissions—it must be imperially applied by the individuals on whom have descended the despotisms of the world. The present Tzar is every inch an Emperor. He is physically one of the strongest men in the Russian Empire, and certainly the strongest Sovereign of the age; while among the many stalwart, handsome Grand Dukes, young and old that grace the Russian Court, there is not one that excels him in good looks, although his brother, the Grand Duke Vladimir, competes with him pretty closely. Quite contrary with usual stories circulated about him, he leads a happy, jolly life—is full of fun, fond of sport, works hard, exacts honesty from his Ministers, and practises, as well as professes, the purest morality. It would be interesting to institute a contrast between the daily life of the Tzar and the daily life of an English statesman—say, Mr. Gladstone. I fear the Russian would come off first. In one respect at least, Alexander III. would secure the preference of right-minded men. While the ministrations at Hawarden Church seem to render Mr. Gladstone only the more intense in his efforts to demonstrate, with a passionate disregard for accuracy, that white is black and black white, the morning visits of the Tzar to the private chapel of the Anitchkin or Gatchina Palace appear to impart clearness to his consultation with his

Ministers and vigour to his rule. The Tzar, beyond question, seems to try his hardest to promote the welfare of his country, to build up instead of pull down, and to guide it out of the political and economical discredit in which his father left it. Up to now his reign has been singularly free from the blunders and disasters which will make the history of the last few administrations of Great Britain intolerable reading for posterity. His decision to abolish the free transit across the Caucasus against the almost unanimous opinion of the State Council—a measure justified by events, and his decision to extend the Transcaspian Railway to Samarkhand, are two instances of the independence of mind which caused him to decide upon the railway from the Urals to the Pacific as the only means of removing the stagnation that has so long made the name of Siberia a reproach to the Russian Empire.

When Alexander III. penned this decree upon the despatch, the question of a railway through Siberia had been several times casually discussed, but only in a *dilletante* or academic sort of way, the idea being regarded as a grandiose one not within the range of practical projects until the completion of the European network of Russia On no occasion had there ever been anything of the character of an agitation in favour of it. Even the Siberians were satisfied with the gradual progress of the line across the Urals to Ekaterinburg and Tiumin, and would have hailed even a line to Tomsk with fervour. In many respects, therefore, the sudden decree of the Tzar was a bolt from the blue. Probably the Ministers of Finance and of Railways were hardly pleased with its suddenness; but in Russia a Minister is often more a servant than an adviser, and it was their duty to carry it into effect with the docility of a disciplined soldier or the same acquiescence of a copying clerk in the merchant's office. There is hardly a doubt that the impulse to construct the line was largely derived from the successful completion of the Pacific railroad across Canada. In most essentials Siberia is to Russia what Canada is to England—a great landed heritage, full of magnificent resources and sparsely populated, waiting to be opened up. If Canada, only slightly supported by the mother-country, could construct a great railway across the whole of her territory, why also could not Siberia, particularly if accorded that warm support by the Imperial authorities which is always so freely forthcoming in a State governed on paternal principles. True England is infinitely richer; but Russia also always has spare money for investment, as evidenced by the recent internal loans having been subscribed for over and over again. Moreover, if English colonies can stand heavy debts of their own, why not also Siberia? After all forty millions sterling would not be an overwhelming condition of

indebtedness for a country traversed throughout by a trunk railway from the Urals to Pekin, and enjoying the overland trade between the Chinese Empire and the Continent of Europe. In England, of course, there would have been a vast amount of preliminary discussion, and years would have been consumed in talking and writing about the project, the statesmen, as usual, opposing it as mad and impracticable, and only acquiescing when the rest of the public was convinced, and 10 or 20 million sterling extra had been wasted over a war of rival projects in time and money lavished on speeches, lectures, pamphlets, and books. In Russia there was nothing of the sort. The Emperor simply wrote—"Let there be a line" and a line there will be, sooner or later, without any of the deluges of discussion which are deemed essential in this democratic country. No doubt discussions have their value; but they never brought about the construction of the Euphrates Railway, they permitted the ruthless stoppage of the Kandahar line, and allowed the material intended for the Suakim-Berber Railway to be shot like rubbish on the Plumstead marshes. On the other hand, without a single discussion, Russia has made an immense hit by her Transcaspian line, which will some day tap the overland trade of India and is about to make a second hit by running across Siberia a line that will tap the overland trade of the Chinese Empire.

It is not generally known that one can already travel by steam from Charing Cross to Tomsk, nearly one third the way across Siberia and 800 miles nearer the Pacific than Tobolsk. The railway course is from Calais, to Nijni Novgorod. The traveller then goes by steamer down the River Volga and up the River Kama to the town of Perm. The railway here commences again, and runs across the Ural hills and through Ekaterinburg to the town of Tinmin. Here the river navigation system of Siberia begins, and the steamer carries the traveller on 1,800 miles further to Tomsk, distant 5,000 miles from Charing Cross. The principal Siberian highway—the great *trakht*, or post-road, across Siberia from the Urals to the Pacific—runs in this direction. A second way to Siberia is *viâ* Orenburg. This differs from the northern route in the fact that there is no break at all in the railway run from Calais to the Urals the line crossing the River Volga near Samara, and being free from the break that intervenes between Nijni Novgorod and Perm. Beyond Orenburg, however, there is no river system, and the country is sparsely populated. It is therefore more used for communication with Turkistan than Siberia. The route actually chosen for the great Pacific Railway lies about midway between the two. It starts from Samara, on the Volga, and runs across steppe country until it reaches the Urals at Ufa, a distance of 325 miles. The line has

been constructed by Government engineers at the cost of the State, the outlay being 24 million roubles, or £400,000. It traverses a splendid country, above all near Ufa, where I have travelled for days through country as beautifully wooded and as charmingly laid out by nature as many an English park. Ufa is a very prosperous Russian town, the capital of the Bashkirs, situated at the head of the navigation system of the River Bairley. Steamers run to Ufa regularly from Nijni Novgorod, and a considerable trade is done between the two places. From Ufa the second section to Zlataoust is already in hand, and parties of engineers are preparing plans of other sections in various parts of Siberia. The section from Vladivostock will be commenced next spring, and perhaps one other section lying between the Siberian rivers, most of which or their branches, although ultimately discharging their waters into the Arctic Sea, have at some period of their career a lateral course, and thereby provide a chain of waterways across Siberia. The absolute route throughout has not yet been decided upon in all its details; but the following are the points that are believed to be favourable—Ufa, Zlataoust, Tcheliab, Kurgan, the southern part of the Ishem district Omsk, Tomsk, Lake Baikal landingstage, the upper course of the Oldura or Ura, the upper Amoor goldfields the middle part of the river Zey, Central Bureia, Little Khingan, Khabarovka-on-the-Amoor, the Ussuri Valley, and Vladivostock. Those who follow the course on the map will observe that it keeps away in general from the river route, and runs through country all provided with means of communication, thereby providing Siberia with a second route and opening up a larger area of territory. As many towns lie on the river route, the injustice to them may seem to be great; but the chief aim in view is not so much to tie a few towns together as to open up the shortest possible main route between Europe and the Pacific, between St. Petersburg and Pekin. Besides, the Siberian towns are all of them insignificant in size and population, Irkutsk, the largest, having only 35,000 inhabitants. Omsk comes next with 30,000; then follow Tobolsk, Barnaul, and Krasnoyarsk, with 15,000 apiece and Tinmin with 13,000, the rest being four towns of 10,000 people each, followed by a series of large villages.

That the State shall construct the line throughout is already determined; as also that the railway shall be finished to Vladivostock before anything be done to force it upon Pekin. The cost, I have said, will range between 35 and 40 millions sterling, and there is not the slightest doubt that every penny of this could be readily raised by loans at moderate interest in Russia itself, particularly if spread over a term of ten years. Certain influential Russian officials, however, are talking of trying to get the line finished in five years,

which would involve the construction of 800 miles a year, or more than two miles a day, and the raising annually of 7 or 8 milions sterling. This sum might be raised if Russia had a succession of good harvests, abstained from diplomatic imbroglios abroad, and refrained from raising any other loans; but I do not think the present condition of Russian finance warrants the belief that the Government can refrain from borrowing for another five years, and doubting moreover whether, in spite of the generally flat surface of Siberia, the Russian engineers could keep on building more than two miles a day of line for five years, omitting all calculations as to climate, I do not believe that the railway can be possibly finished before 1898. Rapid progress may be made by scamping the work and employing a large number of people upon it; but for quite half the year the climate would put a stop to the operations.

But in any case, whether the line take five, ten or fifteen years to construct, constructed it will be, and the political effects will show themselves long before the final rail is laid. The present policy of the Russian Government is to maintain very friendly relations with China in order that it may gradually wean her from her partiality towards England. Russia wishes to make certain that, in the event of war, China will not be the ally of England. Already Russia has removed a deal of the hostility towards her previously rampant at Pekin; and as there are no burning questions disturbing the relations of the two powers now, this friendly tendency may continue. The climax of the new policy would be to make China an ally, and use her contiguity to India as a means of unsettling us on the east and south-east confines of our Indian Empire. This is a policy that requires well looking after at Pekin by our diplomatic representative. In the meanwhile, it is beyond doubt that Russia feels her position in the Amoor region grievously imperilled by the opening of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the constant swarming of the Chinese across the Siberian frontier. Until her Pacific Railway be finished, Russia will never consider her means of defence at Vladivostock superior to the Anglo-Canadian means of attack. Sir Charles Dilke has pointed that out in his recent books, basing his remarks on an article I contributed two years ago to the *Army and Navy Magazine* entitled "Is Vladivostock worth taking?" but he makes the great mistake of imagining that the capture of Vladivostock would paralyse a Russian onslaught on India. What I insisted on was that as a British fleet could do no good in blockading the White Sea and Baltic, it should be sent, instead of to those seas, to the Pacific and seize the Pacific littoral—a blow Russia could not easily repel, and which would cause her a deal of annoyance—at

any rate more so than a futile blockade in the Baltic. But I expressly pointed out, and I cannot understand how Sir Charles Dilke, in appropriating my views in regard to the value of an attack on Vladivostock, can have warped their purport, that the seizure of the Pacific littoral would not in the least influence the Russian march on India, which would have to be fought out, hammer and tongs fashion, on the Helmund. Our occupation of the Pacific littoral could only count subsequently in the event of a failure of the Russian attack on India, when we could use it diplomatically with effect. If, however, we failed to repel the Russian attack, the gain of the supremacy of India would be worth to Russia a hundred Vladivostocks.

With regard to the swarming of the Chinese across the Siberian frontier, this is a movement, little noticed in Europe, which has caused Russia great uneasiness for several years past. So great has been the immigration in the Ussuri region, that four years ago, to counteract the preponderance the Celestials were gaining, Russia began a systematic colonisation of the country, which is to continue until 200,000 Russian souls are established between Vladivostock and the Chinese border. The immigration of Chinese is also prohibited, and the Cossack border guards are encouraged to shoot down the Chinese like dogs if they catch them trying to cross the Russian frontier to settle in the Amoor region. Still the flow continues, and it is largely in order to counteract it, and establish a permanent grip upon the Pacific littoral, that Russia is so anxious to promptly continue her Siberian railroad.

THE TZAR'S ESCAPE.

LONDON, *November 9th, 1888.*

THE miraculous escape of the Russian Imperial family at Borki occupies the entire attention of the Russian public just now. The more the reports of the eye-witnesses are published, the greater becomes the marvel that any member of the family should have escaped at all. I have before me now a Russian plan of the Tzar's carriage, showing the position occupied by every person in it at the moment of the catastrophe. Seventeen persons were seated at table, the Emperor occupying a middle seat on one side and the Empress on the other, the rest being the Heir Apparent, Ministers, Generals, Maids-of-Honour, etc. At the end of the carriage was the buffet.

Lunch was being served at midday, when suddenly three shocks were experienced. At the first, the floor of the carriage tumbled from under the feet; at the second, nearly every one was shot from left to right; and at the third, the roof fell down in a standing position. Luckily the roof was a new one, with a "cupola" running down the middle; and this cupola so fell as to protect the heads of those on the Tzar's side of the table instead of smashing them, which must have been the case had it been flat. A lacquey standing behind the Emperor, and handing a plate over his shoulder when the accident occurred, was hurled to the end of the carriage, and tumbled through the doorway into the buffet compartment, where he and everyone in it was crushed to death. The Tzar's favourite dog Kamtchatka was also killed. For a moment all felt as though they were in a tomb; then the painter Zichy scrambled out of an opening between the roof and the wall of the right side of the carriage, and was followed by the Countess Kutuzoff and the Emperor. The Empress had to be dragged out through a little window. Seeing Baron Shernval lying on the ballast insensible, with his head bleeding, she at once proceeded to him and, taking off her *bashlik* or hood, bound up his wound. The Emperor had a silver cigar case smashed in his pocket. General Tcherevin, sitting next to the Emperor's daughter, the Grand Duchess Ksenia, was cut about the face by a broken mirror. Both officials sitting alongside the Empress were also slightly hurt; but none of the Imperial family received any injuries beyond a bruise or a scratch or two. Many of the Ministers lost their heads for the moment; and one mechanically began to pocket the silver spoons (human nature revealing itself strong in death); while another could not remember the name of his dead servant, and manifested symptoms of temporary imbecility. The Emperor, however, was as cool as a cucumber, and applied his well-known immense bodily strength to the useful task of extricating the wounded. His dexterity with the Russian national weapon—the axe—proved of service in this case. Russian snobs write that he acted "nobly" in thus helping to get out the wounded from the wreckage of the train. Alexander III. would be the last to apply such a term to the part he took in an affair in which it was simply his duty, as an unwounded passenger, to work with the rest of the survivors to succour those who were hurt. The readiness, however, with which he responded to the dictates of duty will not be forgotten by the Russian public, and will cover him with the popularity he merits. His extraordinary escape will be regarded as a miracle by the superstitious people, and will do more to establish his power than any act of his since his accession six years ago.

As usual, sensational reports have circulated with regard to Nihilist plots. Russian-Jewish journalists at Berlin and Vienna make as much "copy" out of affairs of this kind as the Whitechapel penny-a-liners have made out of the exploits of Jack the Ripper; but up to the present moment no evidence has been forthcoming to connect the revolutionaries in the least with the catastrophe. The accident took place between Taranovka and Borki, four hundred and forty miles from Sevastopol. The train had been nearly twenty hours doing this distance, or an average of about twenty-two miles an hour, including stoppages, or twenty-eight without them. The Emperor, who had been reading about the high speeds accomplished on English railways, thought they might go a little faster, and accordingly the rate was increased to forty-two miles. South Russian raliways, however, are proverbially ill-built; and the weight of two heavy locomotives, with nineteen carriages, for the most part twice as large and twice as heavy as English carriages, proved too much for the rain-sodden ballast and rotten sleepers of the Koursk-Kharkoff-Azoff line, accustomed only to light trucks containing coal and corn. Hence the smash. The *Official Journal* announces that the Emperor himself picked up a piece of the rotten sleeper in fault, and handed it over to the chief gendarmez officer to be produced as evidence. The *Novæ Vremya*, in commenting on this, observes that the Emperor's safety during his five thousand versts' journey depended upon seven million sleepers, twenty-eight million bolts, and one million six hundred thousand rails. Not a single sleeper was to blame, but the whole Koursk-Kharkoff-Azoff line, which is rotten throughout. The writer might have gone further and asserted with truth that the rest of the South Russian lines were not much better. Sydney Smith used to say that railway accidents in England would not be checked until a bishop was killed. Now that the equivalent of the Three Estates has nearly been annihilated at a stroke in Russia, the long-needed thorough reorganization of the Russian railways will probably be immediately taken in hand. There is a healthy rumour this morning that the Minister of Railways has been summarily dismissed.

When the present Emperor "came in," all the old Grand Dukes and Ministers "went out," with the exception of Admiral Possiette, Minister of Railways, or, as Russians term him, "Minister of Ways of Communication." A short time ago the Minister celebrated his twenty-fifth year of office, and although he has managed to survive several purgings of corruption in his department and retain the confidence of the Emperor, there can be little doubt the Russian railways would be in a far better condition had he been

shunted when the present Emperor came to the throne. It has always been a matter for remark that he should have managed to survive the charges so long. Under the late Tzar all branches of administration were more or less corrupt. The Ministry of Railways rivalled the other departments in incapacity and impurity. Admiral Possiette could have hardly remained innocent amidst so much sin; and if guilty in participating in that widespread corruption that led to the complete breakdown of the railways during the Russo-Turkish War, he can have hardly become an immaculate Minister with the mere accession of a new sovereign to the throne, although he may have been more careful in concealing his transactions. At any rate, plenty of stories are current in Russia as to his methods of administration which would not stand a day-light examination in a court of law. Still he retained the confidence of the Tzar, and was seated alongside the Empress herself when the accident took place. Whether he is dismissed or not now, Russian railways will undergo a complete overhauling; and the question will naturally occur to the Tzar as to whether a Minister, twenty-five years in office, would not be better replaced by a younger and more vigorous man. When at the Petroleum Exhibition last year, I several times saw him wandering aimlessly about the place—a little, solemn, white-haired old gentleman in a dark, solemn-looking uniform. On one occasion I attended a lecture on photometry, at the close of which the Minister and a good many other officials gathered round a new photometer the lecture had described. One after another each spied through the conning glasses of the instrument, the object being a seventy-candle-power Defries' lamp blazing a few feet off. At last came the turn of Admiral Posiette. In re-arranging the photometer, in order to get the proper focus for his own eyes, he pulled a shutter down over the lens, completely blocking the view and shutting out the light altogether. The lecturer approached to remove the shutter; but the Minister waved him off, and, after spying sagaciously through the darkened tube some time, exclaimed: "Enchanting—measures the light admirably," with an air of such profound conviction and importance that several young students had to flee and to give way to immoderate laughter in a quiet corner.



RUSSIAN MILITARY MOVEMENTS AND THE NEW LOAN.

LONDON, *November 23rd, 1888.*

ONCE more this winter we are having a repetition of the rumours of an impending European war current about this time last year. Russia is concentrating troops on the Austro-German frontier. Russia is raising a new loan, of course, for warlike purposes. Russia is doing this, that, and the other, with warlike intent, and the truth of the statements to this effect cannot be gainsaid, because the German and Austrian Governments are doing this, that, and the other to counteract the effect of those dark and mysterious movements of Russia. In all probability this alarmist tone will continue throughout the winter. It is one of the conditions of the present truce, which is simply one remove from absolute war. Now-a-days campaigns are commmenced in peacetime. Troops are manœuvred against each other quietly, but none the less effectively, on opposite sides of the frontier. An army is no sooner armed with a new weapon than the rival power hastens to adopt a better one. If a new fortress is built, another is constructed to counteract its effects. Quite a race is maintained for the latest secret in explosives. No blood is spilt and no lives are lost ; but the outlay in money and time is enormous, and renders this conflict in time of peace as disastrous in the long run as war. On the frontiers, the subjects of rival countries are treated with as much suspicion and hostility as though they were open foes. Every inquisitive stranger is regarded as a spy. The newspapers on the Continent being largely in Government hands, or under Government control, it follows that the animosities of rival States reveal themselves in printer's ink, and a constant fusilade is maintained between opposing pens. In this hurly-burly of conflicting interests, Germany poses as the preserver of peace, and by means of her many newspapers incessantly assails France and Russia as wolves seeking to rend poor Europe to pieces. To some extent England favours this view, and parrots every cry raised against Russia. Hence Russia's movements are watched with vigilant suspicion, although they are not in the least directed against India, nor yet against Bulgaria.

Some time ago I expressed the candid opinion that it was a good job for England that Russia was as strong as she is. I have never believed in that insensate form of Russophobia which would like to see the Russian Empire pulled to pieces, and a powerful Germany established on a part of the ruins. Germany, Russia, and France, all three, are rivals we should

be wary of, and in view of the check which each exercises on the other, Lord Salisbury would be a poor statesman if he unduly exalted any one, and gave it mastery over the rest. If Russia would be dangerous at Herat, so also would Germany be dangerous in Holland. If France would be a menace to England as victor at Berlin, so also would Germany be a disagreeable rival if she conquered France and stripped her of her colonies as one of the terms of peace. The League of Peace is an excellent institution, but there is no reason why we should blindly attach ourselves to it and be dragged into European complications fomented by Prince Bismarck. What I have to complain of in regard to Colonel Maurice's *Balance of Military Power in Europe* is that he makes it a *sine quâ non* of Indian defence that we should hand ourselves over, body and soul, to this offensive league against Russia and France. He does not take in the wider issues involved. Germany, for instance, is pursuing schemes of colonisation in Africa, which are certainly not advantageous to our interests. To render peace absolutely certain in Europe is to give her a free hand outside, and until we have consolidated our colonial power a little more, it would be obviously unwise to deliberately pave the way for further exploits of the Angra Pequena, New Guinea, and Zanzibar description. It is to our interest that Germany should be curbed and fettered in Europe; and therefore I rejoice that Russia should be moving troops from the Caucasus to Poland, and shall be exceedingly glad if the Russian loan be successfully raised, notwithstanding that in the financial prints with which I am connected I strongly urge upon the English investors not to put a penny in Russian funds.

That Russia should be able to reduce her army in the Caucasus is a blow to those old fossils like General Sir John Adye, who imagine that she only maintains her power and prestige there by retaining a large force on the spot. It further favours the assumption that Russia contemplates nothing for the moment against Asia Minor and also against India. On the other hand, it encourages the belief that Russia means to adopt a stronger attitude in European diplomacy, and in order to do this has resolved to keep the shadow of the sword close behind her Ambassadors. Last year, it may be remembered, there was a furious pen conflict between the official military organs of Russia and Germany as to the forces each power was concentrating on the frontier. Each strove to make the other out the aggressor. In this country the public never expect Russian newspapers to speak the truth. They have a reputation for lying, and it is very difficult for the Russian press to get a hearing even when in the right. On the other hand the German press is supposed to be a truth-loving

press, and no suspicion is directed against its statements. As a matter-of-fact, there is hardly a pin to chose between the two presses, and certainly in the pen fight last year, the German military press distinguished itself in that art of making white appear whitey-brown, which years ago we used to call lying, but which nowadays, when Gladstonianism has rendered politicians of all parties indifferent to the truth, we tolerate as being judicious misrepresentations, justifiable on the ground of "expediency," and so forth.

In the course of this controversy, the Russian military press pointed out that owing to the deficiencies of Russian railways, and the long distances to be traversed, it was absolutely necessary, for purposes of defence, that Russia should maintain a larger standing army in the frontier zone. Anybody who has travelled on both sides of the frontier as I have done, and noted the quicker movement on German railways, the better roads, the better organized depôts, and the superior resources of every kind, cannot but admit the justice of Russia's contention, particularly as only two or three years earlier innumerable books and pamphlets were published in Germany, demonstrating how easily Poland could be severed from Russia. These books put Russia in a fright, and the Germans had only themselves to blame if she sought to render such a seizure impossible. The really vital point at issue was this: did Russia's concentration for defensive purposes mask any artful intention to suddenly let loose the dogs of war on Germany? On this point I can express no positive opinion, as I am not in the confidence of the Emperor of Russia; but certainly all the military men and officials I met in Russia during my three months' stay there last winter disclaimed any such intent to deceive. Well, the present movement of troops is simply the realization of plans openly promulgated a year ago, and in this respect it cannot be said that it has been motived by any fresh change in European politics.

Up to now the Russian Army has comprised the following corps:—The Guards, the Grenadiers, fifteen Army Corps, and two Corps of the Caucasus. From the 1st to the 13th November the number of Army Corps has been raised to seventeen, while one of the two Caucasian corps has been abolished. Two divisions of this corps, the 20th and the 21st, will still temporarily remain on special service in the Caucasus, the one in Daghistan, the other in Tchetchna, these being the only two districts in the Caucasus where any elements of unrest can be said at all to exist. The remaining division—the 19th—hitherto quartered at Stavropol, will be shifted to West Russia and added to the 12th Army Corps, the headquarters of which are located at Kieff

replacing there the 33rd Infantry Division, which is transferred to the 9th Army Corps, the headquarters of which are located at Orel.

The transfer is accompanied by a reorganization of many of the Army Corps, some of which until 1st to 13th November comprised two infantry divisions and others three. The following corps will still contain three divisions : the Guards, the Grenadiers, the 1st Army Corps and the 1st Corps of the Caucasus, henceforth to be known simply as the Corps of the Caucasus. The 2nd, 4th, 6th, and 13th Army Corps, hitherto containing three divisions, will contain two. The new Army Corps formed are the 16th, composed of the 25th and 41st Divisions, taken from the 3rd and 4th Corps, and the 17th, composed of the 3rd and the 35th divisions, taken from the 13th Corps. The 16th Corps, will be located in the Vilna district, the 17th in the Moscow. Besides these and other alterations, the 13th Cavalry Division is transferred to the 15th Army Corps, having its headquarters at Kazan.

The Kharkoff military circle is abolished altogether, the provinces of Tchernigoff, Paltava, Koursk, and Kharkoff being added to the Kieff military circle, and the provinces of Orel and Voronej to that of Moscow. In this manner the Moscow military circle will be the only one left of the "home circles," *i. e.*, circles not touching any foreign State. The Moscow circle will henceforth form a second line, serving for the organization of a great army reserve to assist those armies serving in the first line.

Of course this reorganisation will improve Russia's offensive and defensive power, since it disposes her forces more in the direction of Austria and Germany ; but seeing that it was determined upon last year, it cannot be said to possess any special significance in regard to present events. With respect to the loan, Russia has been trying for years to arrange a conversion of her debt, and the present moment is particularly opportune for a step of this kind. Things are quiet at home, trade is in a better condition, the rouble stands higher than it has done for years, having advanced from 1s. 7d. last winter to 2s. 1d , and there is no special political cloud in the foreign horizon beyond that raised by the movement of troops. Naturally the Germans oppose the loan, because it tends to improve Russia's financial position ; but I question whether this opposition will not help the loan so far as France is concerned. This latter is the most interesting point of the affair. To emancipate herself from thraldom to London, Russia some years ago shifted her financial business to Berlin. But Germany has proved a worse creditor than England, for the Government there has repeatedly of late years tried to pull down Russian credit. A return to England being difficult owing to the dislike of English investors to Russian securities, Russia has turned to France, and if well received at

Paris will probably launch other loans there in due course. This will bring about, perhaps, Russia's emancipation from the Berlin bourse, on whose operations very largely depend at present Russia's financial credit on the Continent. Besides this foreign loan, Russia is raising this week another internal one of over two millions sterling to be applied to the extension of the south-west Russian railway system. In all likelihood this will be a success, as no public companies have been lately formed in Russia to absorb the spare saving of the people, and certain Government and Railway securities have, in consequence, been rising abnormally high.

RUSSIAN PRISONS & SIBERIAN EXILES.

LONDON, *January 11th, 1889.*

THE Howard Association has published in the *Times* this week a weighty and well-worded expostulation against the ill-treatment of exiles and prisoners in Russia. These unfortunates, who at one time could turn their eyes to England, confident of finding sympathy there, have of late years been treated with indifference, if not absolute coldness, in consequence of the misrepresentation of their condition by the Rev. H. Lansdell, and, as a result, have been deprived of that support on the part of English public opinion which has more than once in the past induced the Russian Government to endeavour to ameliorate their wretched lot. While the bitter attacks of Russophobists have little effect for good on the Russian Imperial authorities, the latter are very sensitive to the criticism of civilisation, judiciously applied, and on this account the protest of the Howard Association—a Society whose services to humanity are fully known and appreciated in Russia—cannot but exercise important influence. Publicity is the most potent weapon of all for eradicating the abuses of Siberian exile. In this respect the admirable articles of Mr. George Kennan, in the *Century* magazine, have penetrated to the very roots of the exile system, and will probably lead to much inquiry and information. Honestly, as well as earnestly, written by an American who is a real and not a sham friend of the Russian people, they expose the foulness of the system to the glare of public indignation in a manner which the Russian Government cannot—and I think I may safely say will not—disregard.

It may surprise some when I mention that I read most of the early articles of Mr. Kennan in Russia itself. Repeatedly during my three months' stay at St. Petersburg last year, I came across copies of the *Century* magazine in Russian houses, and

always heard the articles approvingly spoken of even by Government officials violently antagonistic to the Nihilist movement. It is the greatest mistake in the world to suppose that the servants of autocracy in general delight in the devilries of the present exile system. On the contrary, many officials are doing their utmost to get the abuses remedied, working with a zeal and a sympathy as ardent as any humanitarian could desire. Unfortunately, they are handicapped by the cold remorseless grinding of official routine on the one hand, and by a tightly gagged press on the other. It is a far cry from a charitable bureaucrat to the Cabinet of the Tzar. However, what Russians themselves could not do an American has done. "The Emperor is reading every one of Kennan's articles, and reading than carefully," said a High Court official to me on one occasion while discussing the contents of the last number of the *Century* magazine he had just received; and no one who knows the real character of Alexander III. will believe that he will brutally ignore the burning appeal made to him on behalf of the poor wretches in the dungeons of the Empire. Because he does not believe Russia is yet ripe for a babbling Parliament, and because he strikes hard at those who try and undermine autocracy, it does not necessarily follow that he approves of a system, of the evils of which he is to a large extent ignorant, any more than the Four Estates in this country approve of the bad accommodation provided for persons on their trial at the assizes in provincial England, indignantly denounced by several Judges last year. In the latter case, publication of the evil in the ear of the nation through the press is leading to reform; and in the former publication in the ear of the Tzar by means of George Kennan's articles will, I believe, lead to beneficial results, above all if the admirable exposé of Mr. Kennan's and the protest of the Howard Association be followed by still further publicity.

As Mr. Kennan's account is so widely different, perhaps I may as well indicate, as a stranger to both writers, what I consider to be the causes of their conflicting testimony. In spite of several journeys in Russia, Mr. Lansdell is absolutely ignorant of the language, being unable to conduct the most trifling conversation with the people he meets; the native literature on the subject—notwithstanding the censorship, exposures of the exile system are constantly taking place in the press and in reports issued by prison committees—is closed to him; and wherever I have travelled over the same ground, I have found he confines his investigations mainly to questioning officials in their own homes, at their dinner tables, instead of quietly pursuing his enquiries among the exiles and prisoners themselves. On the other hand, Mr. Kennan speaks Russian, and has diligently

collected and studied the official and private literature dealing with exiles and prisoners; while instead of racing through Siberia full speed, and spending the moments of halt in hotels or at the homes of the officials, he went over the ground slowly and stayed long enough in each place to gain a proper insight into the slums of Siberia. If unlike Mr. Lansdell, he was unable to go over the fortress of St. Petersburg, it may be pointed out that the reverend tourist went over it without a plan; he could not speak Russian to the prisoners, a defect he did not attempt to rectify by taking with him some English resident speaking the language; and in making his researches, he was wholly at the mercy of an official guide who has since treated Mr. Landsdell's solemn account of his hasty survey as one of the funniest jokes ever perpetrated by a deluded foreigner. Mr. Lansdell probably did his best according to his light; but his light was a very limited one, of the farthing rushlight description, and quite different from the flaring torch which Kennan has carried through the Russian prison system. Moreover, Lansdell, who personally is a curiously cold, if not selfish man, has absolutely not a spark of sympathy for the prisoners he went to see, whether criminal or political. Hence his utter inability to comprehend the feelings of an educated man torn from his family, and on some slight charge, often false, sent thousands of miles into exile. It is well that this should be clearly understood, because an attempt may be made to minimize the value of the timely protest of the Howard Association by pitting Mr. Lansdell's superficial tourist jottings against the close, steady studies of Mr. Kennan, conducted much after the manner Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace made famous a decade ago.

I am not one of those who believe that a Parliament, on the English model, suddenly applied to Russia, would be a panacea for all the evils under which the country at present labours, and prefer to see Russia work out her political salvation in her own way. I can well understand why the Emperor should hesitate, and hesitate wisely, before saddling on Russia institutions which even we, owing to obstruction and verbosity, are ourselves somewhat sick of. Pending a solution of the constitutional problem, any attempts to promote administrative reform of abuses in Russia by publicity abroad cannot but be regarded with gratitude, both by the sufferers themselves and the Russian public generally. The *Century* magazine has done a signal service in this direction by sending Mr. Kennan, with a photographer and artist, to Siberia; and if this and the protest of the Howard Association be followed up by other measures that will readily occur to philanthropists, America and England may be able to bring about an amelioration of infinite human misery, and at any rate will aid

the efforts of Russians themselves to abolish the exile system to Siberia altogether.

Mr. Kennan's articles run through Volumes XIII. and XIV. of the *Century* magazine, and are still in progress. The sketches and illustrations are both artistic and truthful, and when complete will constitute the best record of the exile and prison system of Russia yet published.* While in Russia I invariably heard Mr. Lansdell's books spoken of with contempt in spite of the spirit of adulation pervading them. I found few, whether Russians or English residents, who regarded Mr. Kennan's articles as otherwise than painstaking and realistic representations of facts which are certainly not hidden to Russians themselves, whatever they may be to a chance stranger who skims over the country like a dragonfly over a weed-infested pond.

The Russian military authorities in the Caucasus are inviting tenders at Tiflis for the construction of Cossack barracks on the Persian frontier, close to where the military road from Askabad to Meshed crosses it. These are to be of a substantial character, and will probably form the nucleus of a future Russian settlement on the spot.

The Russian press is noting the significance of the fact that the Shah of Persia, who leaves shortly on a new European tour, does not propose to pay a visit to England, although he will travel as far as Paris. If he were really anxious for British aid and a development of British influence inside his dominions, as declared by the Conservative press on the occasion of the recent Te Deums over the Karun concession, it is not probable that he would go so far from Teheran without paying a visit to London. For my part, I have never been sanguine that either England or Persia could derive much benefit from the present Shah, and do not expect much from Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's diplomacy. If the Persian Gulf littoral is to be saved from seizure by Russia, something better than the chit chat of Shah and Ambassador at Teheran will be needed, and at present there are no indications forthcoming.

The War Office is making amends for the suppression of my lecture in December. This week I have received an official invitation to give two lectures on petroleum before the School of Military Engineering at Chatham at the end of the month, or the first week in February, for which the Government have assigned a grant. The invitation is purely spontaneous, and on this account the more gratifying, since otherwise it would not have been a satisfactory amend for the uncourteous manner in which the lecture on "Cutting Russia's road to India" was suppressed. The latter I shall not now deliver until the two at Chatham have been disposed of.

TIKHOMIROFF GOES BACK.



LONDON, *January 25th, 1889.*

THE news that Tikhomiroff, one of the most influential of the reactionary leaders at Geneva, has been pardoned by the Russian Imperial Government, and will return home at once, is a blow to those cosmopolitan conspirators who have no other aim in life than the promotion of universal chaos. In all probability it will be followed by other recantations. For some time past Nihilism has been in a depressed condition, and I know more than one of the refugees in this country who would be only too glad to return home. Freedom is a delightful institution in theory; but the "flesh-pots of Egypt" appeal to the exile with a keenness which no mere residence in the free and unfettered lands of Switzerland and England can compete and compensate for. For the sake of freeing his country from those bureaucrats who are a nuisance in every country, many a sanguine youth of patriotic aspirations has in the past quitted a happy home, and turning his back on a circle of kind faces (how many kind Russian faces pass before me now, as I lean back in my study chair in a reverie!) has buried himself alive in the filthy hovels of the working classes to educate them to fight for liberty. After months of hard work, in the foulest surroundings perhaps, have followed discovery and imprisonment. Then have come perhaps escape from prison and flight to London —to make the discovery there that in the land *par excellence* of liberty, poverty is looked upon as a crime, that districts as large as St Petersburg are given up to squalor and misery, without Parliament caring one rap about the matter, that private vested interests are allowed to appropriate nearly the whole of London's river bank, to spoil the finest thoroughfares, and surround the garden squares with barricades of iron. In London he finds himself as completely lost as in one of his own great morasses. Cold faces surround him; nobody well-dressed seems to rate him higher than a vagabond, unless it be his fellow-refugees and sympathisers; and these also he observes are looked upon as having lost caste. When he talks about "patriotism," people listen with a smile for to their view it is now the trick of the political swindler to pose as a patriot. No wonder he soon grows tired at their cold narrow ways, and misses the general good nature, the breadth of view, and the happy-go-lucky toleration of his countrymen. He finds that, save on exceptional occasions, one can be just as badly off personally under a Parliament as under an autocracy. If the Imperial family waste their time at balls and dinners and the pleasures of Court life, the

Parliament of Great Britain also wastes its hours in babble and disorder. Great social questions are shelved in order that this or the other party may win in some interminable conflict over a peddling little matter that in Russia would be polished off sharp by a single functionary; and imposing commissions, after sitting for years on poverty, the housing of the masses, or what not, disperse without any further notice being taken of their reports than if there had been no investigation. In London people take life in pen'worths. To a Russian it soon becomes intolerable, and he longs for the brighter climate, the cheaper food, and the more comfortable lodgings at home. I imagine there are few Russian refugees to whom the reflection does not come some time or other, after sleeping perhaps in a cold and cheerless London bed-room in the dull and nipping month of November, with the landlady clamouring for the rent, and threatening to turn him out into the streets of a city whose five millions of free-born citizens care nothing for his fate (notwithstanding that so many may spout or write about their love of liberty), I imagine there are few refugees who do not feel they were fools for forsaking their homes for a bubble, and would be only too glad to return to Russia if assured of a free pardon.

Paris and Geneva are not so bad as London, above all the latter place, where landladies, as a Nihilist told me the other day, are more charitable, and will often give the refugees months and months of credit. But in London the revolutionist is a fish out of water. He is no longer fondled by society. The police hustle him about as much as the police in Russia, and on occasions do not hesitate to baton him if he expresses his feelings too much in illegal crowds. I do not believe in revolutions and wholesale schemes of reform of the Socialist description myself, and in many things prefer autocracy to a Parliamentary system of Government; but I have a deep sympathy for these poor fellows. For years I have always recommended them for Russian lessons whenever any officer has written to me for the name of a teacher; and at times there have been pleasant Sunday parties of them at Plumstead, where, for one day at least, they have, let me hope, forgotten their troubles, and revelled in roast beef, Christmas pudding and porter. It may be asked, why this fare? Well, when I was a lad in Russia, there were Russians who were never tired of making known to me the remarkable and numerous dishes of their country. It was long before I learnt to love them—on one memorable occasion I remember, I was nourished on communion bread for a considerable period, till I learnt to like black bread, the priest sending a supply from the church every few days; but I do like Russian living, and whenever I pay a trip to Russia my many

friends there seem never tired of tempting me beyond the limits of hygienic propriety. Russians, on their part, run away with the impression that we are a race of tremendous eaters of substantial fare; believing firmly that we dine almost every day upon "roast-beef, plum-pudding, and porter." So that when Russians come, whether Nihilists or Imperialists, a large sirlion, a flaring plum-pudding, flanked by tankards of strong ale and porter, always make their appearance on the table, and it does one's heart good to see how these poor revolutionaries enjoy this good old English fare. Then old battles are fought again round the fireside, political theories are thrashed out, and personal revelations are sometimes made that shed a light upon the hopes, aspirations, and aims of the revolutionary leaders and enable one to see the great revolt of Russian intelligence against autocracy from a very different standpoint to that of the tourist or travelling Pharisee of the Lansdell description.

It is curious what a little sympathy leads to. In Russia I never openly flaunt my opinions in public places; but I never conceal them in private. On one occasion I was arrested as a Nihilist at Moscow, but this was due to the officiousness of a dvornik during the cornation ceremonies, and the detention caused me no after trouble. On another occasion I was suddenly summoned to a police-station at ten o'clock at night, and departed from my lodgings followed by the ominous looks of my English friends, but there was only a trifling informality in my passport, and I was back again in half-an-hour. Last winter a foreign consul, who was intimately acquainted with the chief of the secret police, informed a friend of mine that a man had been put on to watch my movements; but I never saw the man and never bothered about him—looking indeed upon him as a kind of friendly protector during my prowlings at night among the poorer neighbourhoods of the capital, an old pleasure of mine. But what I was going to mention was that being one day at the Petroleum Exhibition, negotiating a contract on the part of some English friends with a certain merchant over a tumbler of tea, he led the conversation round to the kind of Russians settled in London, and effected the discovery that I was a friend of one of the best known of the revolutionaries. In a moment the old man was off, and in a few minutes he returned with a naval officer, an author, a teacher, and another merchant, and in a few minutes more, all were drinking enthusiastically to the "dear old absent friend in London," a toast I am not ashamed to say that I myself proposed when the glasses of vodky were clinking together, and everybody was looking at everybody else to propose the sentiment. After that there was nothing more said about petroleum (although the night's proceedings favourably affected the contract), and a good deal

was said about politics, notwithstanding that the door from the room to the bar was open, and police officers and officials were lounging about the place smoking and drinking. Not one of these Russians, although their friend was reported, whether truly or not I do not know, to have participated in the killing of a certain tyrannical functionary, was what an English newspaper would have meant by the appellation of Nihilist. They were simply Radicals anxious to see reform, but no longer ready to rush at the throat of the Tzar to secure it, and if their views are common among the generality of men discontented with the existing state of things, a fresh generation will have to grow up before there will be a recurrence of the reign of terror —above all, if the Government pardons other political offenders besides Tikhomiroff.

In many things the Russians are more oppressed by bureaucracy than they were in the late Emperor's reign; but it is impossible for any but a fanatic to regard Russia as retrograding. If the system of government has not been rendered more liberal, the men who rule Russia have been changed by a better class of men at the heads of the administration. In politics as well as in social life, the change from Alexander II. to Alexander III. is a change not far dissimilar from that of George IV. to that of Queen Victoria. The late Emperor not only led a gay life, but his brothers all followed his example, the Ministers followed suit (Gortschakoff was more often in a brothel than in his master's cabinet), and when the functionaries saw Grand Duke's pillaging the departmental funds to maintain their mistresses in lavish splendour, it is not surprising that the entire service was corrupt, and whole classes of the community discontented. The present Emperor, on the other hand, and his brothers Vladimir and Alexis, are honest men of strict morality, having moreover, genial manners, who take an honest interest in their work, and enforce it as far as they can throughout the service. No doubt plenty of corruption prevails, but it is punished when found out, instead of being tolerated as before. "Uncle, what's a fleet?" once said the present Heir-apparent to the Grand Duke Constantine before his father ascended the throne.

"A fleet," replied the head of the navy, "Why, a fleet is a lot of vessels."

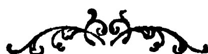
"No, uncle, not that kind of fleet," rejoined the boy earnestly, "I mean the fleet that you drink—is it a wine, or what?"

"There's no such thing, my boy. Where did you hear the word?"

"Oh, from papa. I heard him say to mamma that you were drinking all the fleet!" Tableau. In another popular story, the boy was made to say :—"Uncle, what is a *Razboinik?*" "*A razboinik* is a thief." "But isn't it something else?" "No, nothing else." "But it must be, uncle, I see you don't know." "Yes, I do, there is no other meaning for the word; it means a scoundrel who steals and robs from poor people." "But there must be another meaning uncle," persisted the boy, "because I heard papa call you a razboinik to mamma, and you can't be that."

Stories, such as those, were as plentiful as blackberries ten years ago in Russia. One hears nothing of the sort against Vladimir and Alexis, who have succeeded Nicholas and Constantine as heads of the army and navy. If the Russian institutions are more tightly managed than before, and the press drops in captivity, Russia has less to complain at, less to blush at, than ten years ago. "What a blight inflicted on noble effort! What a useless sacrifice!—the assassination of the late Emperor," said a politician to me the other day! "The bomb that blew up the Emperor shattered the whole revolutionary movement, and threw back Russia a hundred years." "My dear sir," I replied, "if you knew how great a social and political change was accomplished by that act, you would say that, so fear from not causing a revolution, it really did accomplish at a stroke an immense revolution in the direction of improvement, although it may have been a different kind of transformation from that contemplated by the Tzarindes."

One can express such an opinion while censuring the Tzarindes and deploring the death of an Emperor who, with all his faults, had much that was worthy of respect in him. It is because Russia is better governed that the Imperial Government can afford to let plotters like Tikhomiroff go back; and it is because this is recognised by such men that Tikhomiroff is willing to make peace with the Russian authorities.



THE REVIVAL OF RUSSIA AND THE IMPENDING BURMESE BOOM.

LONDON, *March 15th, 1889.*

ONE of the most remarkable events of the last twelve months is the revival that has taken place in Russian credit and trade. When I crossed the frontier in January last winter, I received about ten roubles in exchange for the pound sterling—nine roubles ninety-five copecks, I think—at the German station of Eydtkunin, and ten roubles at the Russian station of Wirballen or Virjhbolova. That meant that the rouble was worth about 2s. apiece. Before the Russo-Turkish War it had been worth 2s. 9d., half-a-crown being in those times regarded as the average for rough monetary calculations. In proceeding to Russia, my expenses had been fixed on the two shillings' scale. I had not been in St. Petersburg a week, however, before the rouble began to fall, and soon I was receiving 11½ and 11¾ roubles for the pound, being an improvement in my favour of two or three shillings in every pound I spent. On one occasion the rouble even touched eighteen pence; but this was on the darkest day of the three months' depression that prevailed during my stay at St. Petersburg. This fall in Russian credit put a stop to all business. Then, in the spring the subsidence in the warlike feeling towards Germany, and the sudden export of vast quantities of corn, caused a re-action to set in. The rouble rapidly improved till a pound sterling fetched only 9½ roubles, and this rate of exchange has been maintained ever since. In consequence of the previous fall in the rouble, the Minister of Finance had been compelled to increase the taxes so as to meet the heavy drain on the revenue occasioned by having to pay many of the loans in gold. The result of the rise, therefore, was that instead of a deficit, or an even balance, the Minister this year finds himself in possession of a bouncing surplus of ten millions sterling—a thing unheard of in Russia since the Crimean War. This unexpected windfall has stiffened Russian credit immensely, besides giving a vigour to Russian financial policy hitherto impossible. Thus one hears of the daring determination to finish off the great Siberian railway in three short years if the engineers can manage it; while the crude-oil pipe-line scheme, on which English capitalists are about to stake three millions sterling, is to receive a guarantee of at least 3 per cent, from the State. The great Siberian railway I described in your columns some time ago. On this occasion I will say a few words about the crude-oil pipe-line scheme. This is a project for connecting the Baku oil region with the Black Sea

by means of a pipe-line five hundred miles long. The idea is by no means new. Many schemes have been broached at different times by English, Russian, and American speculators; but until the petroleum traffic on the State-aided Transcaucasian railway became too enormous for the capacity of the line, the Russian Government refused to sanction any of the schemes. A year ago a Government Committee drew up the terms of a proposed concession, which were accepted by a Russian named Elimoff, who, after an interesting succession of events, which it would be premature to describe to-day, finally made arrangements with a powerful English Syndicate. It is this Syndicate that is now face to face with the Russian Government, and the amended concession, having passed the Committee of Ministers, is expected to be signed by the Czar himself this week. It is very curious to note how readily powerful banks and capitalists have taken up the scheme. At the head of the Syndicate is Sir Edward Thornton, formerly British Ambassador at St. Petersburg. Starting from Baku, the pipe-line will take a short cut *viâ* Shemakha, etc., to the Tiflis district, joining the Transcaucasian railway at that part, and thence make its way alongside it to Batoum or Poti, on the Black Sea. The engineering arrangements are quite complete. They were in readiness, worked out to the last detail, when I saw them at Moscow last year; and although the pipe-line has to traverse mountains three thousand feet high and rivers seven hundred feet broad, the difficulties are nothing beyond what have been already successfully overcome in America. The pipes will have a diameter of eight inches, and will stand a pressure of 1,800lbs. to the square inch. Pumping stations will be erected every twenty miles or so. The total quantity of oil that will flow through the pipe annually will be 1,311,000 tons. As soon as two-thirds of this capacity is reached, the Company will have to lay down a second pipe-line. The actual cost of the first pipe-line will be not far short of a million-and-a-half sterling. The attention given to the scheme by London banks is a striking illustration of the revival of Russian credit. Three years ago no London bank would have handled such a scheme. For ten years all connection between London and Russian enterprises has been practically severed. I question whether in the whole of that period ten Russian enterprises have been floated in this country. Plenty of Russians have come here with financial projects, but they have had to go away again with lightened pockets and long faces. Concurrently with this, many of the English firms in Russia have liquidated their enterprises and withdrawn completely from business in that country. A striking illustration of this was the action of the banking house of Thomson Bonar and Company, which drew all its money out of Russia after a long and honourable record at St. Petersburg, and

diverted it to South America. I cannot but frankly admit that this has been a policy I always approved of, and for ten years I have repeatedly recommended in the financial press the diversion of capital from Russian to Colonial enterprises. It is far easier to find remunerative undertakings in the Colonies than in Russia, and one has not got to contend there with that spirit of hostility towards foreigners, which has long been growing in Russia. It is true that this feeling has been directed chiefly against the Germans; but all the same, it is not a pleasant one for business men to have to contend with. Russia has not gained, but rather lost, by her manifestations against foreigners and her aggressive policy against this country. But for the Russian advance in Central Asia, fifty or a hundred millions sterling, which the British public might have invested in Russian enterprises during the last ten years, have been diverted to the Colonies and South America, and have been applied to the development of products in direct rivalry with those of Russia. For a few years this withdrawal of English financial aid from Russia was not missed, because the gap was filled by the influx of capital from Germany. The hostile policy of Russia towards Germany, however, has put a stop to this flow, and Russia now looks to Paris and London, instead of to Berlin, in obtaining capital for industrial enterprises. As might have been expected, the French have readily responded to the appeal for cash, and will probably continue to do so; but any flow of money from England must always be of a fluctuating character. It is largely owing to the difficulty of finding remunerative investments that causes London banks to turn again to Russia. South African investments abound, but capitalists do not like to put their eggs all in one basket. So Australia and Canada having successively boomed and dropped out of favour, company promoters are looking about elsewhere for a fresh field of enterprise for the public. Herein lies a golden opportunity for Burma.

It is to be hoped that the Indian Government will avail itself of the tendency to exploit Burma to give every encouragement to English speculators to do so. It is the changed attitude of the Colonial Office (where a fostering policy is now in vogue) towards South African ventures that has caused the recent rush towards the Zambesi. The Russian Government, which is well versed in the art of drawing political advantages from trade, has this week sanctioned an important measure with regard to Persian trade in the Caspian Sea. For the future, Persian goods from Meshed, delivered at Askabad and on other stations of the Transcaspian railway, will be allowed to be sent, duty free, to Baku and Batoum. It is expected that this will divert to Russia a deal of the caravan trade between Persia and Turkey; and at any rate most of the trade between the

two Persian centres of Tabreez and Meshed. The diminution of the caravan trade on the north Persian highways will weaken the connection between Khorassan and the rest of Persia; while the attraction of the trade to the Transcaspian railway will strengthen still further Russia's relations with that region. The more Askabad attracts the trade that formerly flowed by road between Meshed and Teheran, the more Russia will separate Meshed from the Persian capital. The new measure, therefore, is a clever diplomatic stroke, and will doubtless be used to the utmost by M. Gospodin Vlasoff, who arrived at Askabad last week on his way to take up his new appointment as Russian Consul-General at Meshed.

I have repeatedly drawn attention to the gradual colonization of the Caucasus by Rassia. A correspondent of the *Novœ Vremya*, writing from Vladikavkaz says that last year over two thousand Russian men, women and children passed through there on their way to Transcaucasia. In December a hundred and seventy families arrived from Saratoff, and dividing themselves into two parties, one went on to Daghestan to settle down, and the other to Kars. The movement is quite spontaneous, and does not receive the least encouragement from the Russian Government.

TURKISTAN IN DISFAVOUR.

LONDON, *November 15th, 1889.*

THE close of General Rosenbach's career in Turkistan has attracted no comment of importance in Russia. Turkistan no longer possesses political interest. Time was, when the eyes of all Russia were turned in the direction of Tashkent, and young bloods, fretting for fame, did their utmost to get a spell in Turkestan while some campaigning was on. But the campaigning and the campaigning days of Turkistan are over. There is no longer any excitement in that quarter. All the khanates have been conquered that were marked out for conquest, and what is worse, all the romance has gone out of Central Asia. The Unknown is always interesting. Five-and-twenty years ago, Turkestan was more or less unknown, and a fascination hung over cities that had not been visited by Europeans for a prolonged period, and could only be visited by the most venturesome, at the risk of one's eyes and life. To march over vast deserts and storm the strongholds of the Tartars was most delightful work for the Russians. To them, Central Asia possessed an attraction which

no Englishman could feel, for out of that region had sprung the hordes that had overrun and kept Russia in bondage for three centuries, and a feeling of righteous revenge animated many who planned and executed the seizure of the capital of Tamerlane. When old scores had been paid off by the conquest of Samarkhand, Bokhara, Tashkent, and Khiva, there was the fighting with the Turkomans to keep up the interest in Turkistan. Everything, however, has an end, except the Parnell Commission, and with the fall of Merv and capture of Penjdeh, the period of romance and excitement in Central Asia came to an end. The construction of the railway to Samarkhand rendered Turkistan as commonplace as any country in Europe. He who goes to Turkistan is looked upon no longer as a traveller and a great traveller, but as a mere tourist who has gone a few inches beyond Moscow and is not much the better for the change. Instead of the magic words, "Just arrived from Turkistan," causing a flutter in a ball-room and turning all eyes in the direction of the hero of the great exploit—and is not the admiring glance of bright eyes worth going to the end of the world for?—they attract no more notice now than any passing remark about the weather, or the conventional chatter about one's health. An officer, therefore, obtains no prestige by merely going to Turkistan, and he gains nothing worth having when he gets there. It is not simply that all Turkistan has been conquered, but all beyond is in a state of tranquility and peace.

At the best of times, Turkistan had always the reputation of being an "infernally dull place;" but the romance attaching to it gilded the dullness, and beside there was the ever-present chance of glory by some coup of the Tashkent description to relieve the monotony of garrison life in a howling desert like the Aral region. Stripped of all romance and glory, Turkistan is as bad to get appointed to as the remotest provinces of Eastern Siberia or the lonely island of Saghallien. Moreover, the area of the province has been cut down until it is a very small administrative district compared with what it used to be. Hence it is not popular, and service there is looked upon as absolute exile. Officers of position and means evade being appointed to such an out-of-the-way wilderness, and suicide is common among those who are not so lucky to escape banishment to dreary frontier posts. On this account, General Rosenbach is congratulated instead of pitied at coming home again after six years of dreary and uneventful service in Turkistan, and General Vrevsky is regarded as an unlucky fellow in being shifted from Kieff to Tashkent. Even the newer province of Transcaspia is not popular, in spite of the early annexation of Khorassan being looked upon as a settled

thing. The annexation, when accomplished, is expected to be done peacefully without any military glory, and thus it is a matter that concerns more the civilian official than the fighting man. As for the post at Merv, and Alikhanoff's chances in the direction of Afghanistan, now that the railway runs thither, there would be plenty of time for smart officers to reach the place from St. Petersburg, before hostilities commenced, and therefore nothing is to be gained in going there months or years beforehand. Formerly the case was different. When to get to Kaufmann's army was a journey of months, it was necessary for officers who wanted to secure decorations by participating in some campaign, to get appointed to Turkistan in good time and remain on the spot until the fighting began. There would be no difficulty now for the sons and nephews of the great officers of State to shift themselves from the gay *salons* of St. Petersburg to the camps on the Murghab long before the Merv forces began to invest Herat. Why, therefore, bury one's self at Merv? Better remain at home and get appointed to some of the frontier districts adjacent to Austria and Germany, where the chances of war are considerably greater. Such is the argument of Russian officers now-a-days. Central Asia generally is at a discount and played out. It no longer provides a chance for a rapid career or gives promise of an early war. On the other hand, those who hold good appointments in certain districts on the Austro-German frontier, consider themselves bound to win distinction and glory at an early date. Meantime, West Russia is more lively than Turkistan, and while officers at Samarkhand and Merv cannot amuse themselves by a trip to Kabul and Herat, those at Warsaw, Kieff and other centres can easily get by rail to Vienna, one of the most delightful cities in Europe, where they can have their fling at pleasure as only a Russian can.

On this account, West Russia is to-day what Turkistan was a quarter of a century ago, the happy hunting ground of warriors waiting for the good time when the Tzar will give the order for a rush upon Vienna or Berlin. The knowledge that the Russians are in force along the frontier only waiting for a signal to pour in masses across the border, probably causes Prince Bismarck many an unpleasant hour. France he has, and always has had, a certain measure of contempt for; but he knows too well the significance of the vast obedient forces at the control of one man in Russia, to feel easy at the presence of an army ever on the *qui vive* on Germany's eastern border. So far as Germany and France are concerned, every year's delay in commencing the war of revenge is an advantage for the former, because the Germans are more prolific than the French, and every year, therefore,

witenesses an increase to the numerical superiority of Germany. But when the comparison is made between Germany and Russia, the advantage lies with Russia. In Russia the population is not only rapidly increasing, but owing to the vast reserve of unoccupied territory she owns in Europe, she has room for several hundred million people at home, whereas the ground in Germany is already more or less taken up, and a large proportion of Germany's increase has to go to America and elsewhere, where it is lost. How to prevent this loss is no easy problem for Germany to solve. Even if she had colonies in temperate regions, which she has not, the increase would still be severed from the Empire, whereas in the case of Russia the increase is an increase that stops at home. This is true even so far as cis-Caucasia—the favourite field of Russian colonization—is concerned, because that region abuts on the Black Sea, and is as much part and parcel of European Russia as Posen is of the German Empire. Thus we may say that while Germany waxes stronger than France every year, Russia waxes stronger than Germany, and Prince Bismarck knows it. Better than any of his countrymen, he realizes that if a *modus vivendi* cannot be arranged between Germany and Russia, the menace on the Eastern border will become more and more serious as years roll on. Hence his present efforts to "square" Russia.

Whether these will be successful, time alone can show. On a previous occasion, when he arranged a common alliance between Germany, Austria, and Russia, he squared Russia, at the expense of England. We had to pay the piper at Merv and Penjdeh. For a time Russia seemed to have the best of the bargain, but when she found Germany had managed by means of her alliance to secure huge slices of Africa and become a colonial power, and persisted afterwards nevertheless in preventing Russia making any move in Bulgaria, the Tzar fell out with the Honest Broker. The task, consequently, of striking a second bargain with a disillusionized and disgusted customer, is not an easy one even for such an artful dodger as Prince Bismarck. Probably, despite the good understanding between England and the League of Peace, he would be capable of squaring Russia again by turning her attention towards Afghanistan, or Asia Minor, but the Russians are not to be caught a second time with chaff. They have brought and massed their troops on the German and Austrian frontiers, and they are not disposed to take off the pressure in that quarter until there is a proper reckoning in the Balkan Peninsula. So much is this policy persisted in, that I hear this week from Russia that the troops sent from Samarkhand to Korki this time last year, to overawe the Ameer, have been removed from the Oxus to their old quarters again. This is commented upon at St. Petersburg as implying a fixed intention to make no move on the Afghan

frontier for the present, and to keep up the tension on the Austrian frontier. It is to that quarter that troops and stores are incessantly being sent Russia may have no definite plan of invading Austro-Germany on a fixed date—wars are not commenced and carried on now-a-days in this precise fashion—but she is none the less making such extensive preparations that when the signal is given, a large army will be quite ready to roll across the border towards Vienna or Berlin. Meanwhile, Russia already enjoys the benefit of being ready for war, Germany having become increasingly conciliatory in her diplomatic attitude, as large forces have moved into position on the Austrian forntier. How long the tension will keep up no one can safely predict. The expense to all the Powers of keeping vast forces in constant readiness for commencing a campaign on receipt of a telegram is enormous; but Russia, with her millions of peasants, content with the cheapest food and the poorest pay, can stand the strain better than any of them, while it is not much dearer to keep troops massed in Kieff and Warsaw than in Kazan or Perm. Shifting her forces from the south and eastern province to the west, does not weaken her a jot south and east, for she has no enemy to attack her there. It is different with Germany, who has to keep on the *qui vive* on both sides of her Empire, and have vigilant eyes at the back of her head as well as in the usual sockets.

AFRAID OF DEAD BONES.

LONDON, *November 22nd, 1889.*

I OBSERVED the other day that the Russians are greatly given to excessive praying over the dead. They spend as much time, I said, in praying for those below ground, as we English people spend in praying for those above it. I cannot candidly say I consider it a healthy practice, or one calculated to do much good. The world is mournful enough without making it more melancholy by unnecessary and superfluous dirges, while it is bad enough to have to worry about the living, without concerning one's self too much with the fate of the dead. However, the Russians, one and all, think otherwise, and I should be the last in the world to criticise deridingly what most of them honestly believe to be a solemn duty. When a soul has vanished—the Russians have a picturesque practice of opening the window when the last breath has passed the lips, in order that the disembodied spirit may issue into the open air—it is deemed incumbent upon all those who knew, loved, and admired the departed to meet

together to pray that his or her sins may be forgiven. Sharing the view, whether rightly or wrongly, I will not stop to discuss, that the fate of a soul is settled pretty quickly after death, it has always seemed to me superfluous to attempt to pr.cu- it into Paradise, not only by the mass immediately after death, but by repetitions the next day, the next week, the next month, the next year, or the next century, as many Russians are fond of doing. Still there is something very ... and very appropriate in the assembling together directly after death of all who knew and loved a man to pray that his sins may be forgiven him. Even if it does not benefit the dead it is calculated to have a softening and improving influence on the living. For my part, I hope, when I die, my friends (and my enemies) will assemble and put in an appeal for me; for, alas! my sins have been many, including that dire and dreadful disclosure of the Anglo-Russian agreement, and I am afraid I shall be in a sorry plight unless more mercy be shown to me than Russia recently shown to poor Dr. Noetling. Should such a meeting take place in England or in Russia, I trust the "bobby" will not ... in and plant his truncheon between the prayers of the living and the soul of the dead, as has just been witnessed in the case of Tchernishevsky at St. Petersburg.

Tchernishevsky died in exile at Saratoff a few days ago, and early this week a number of students at the military college assembled openly to implore Divine mercy for the dead man. The rite was a religious one, common as I have just said, on the part of the friends and admirers of Russians, whatever their rank or opinions, and if it was calculated to do the dead man any good, there was all the more reason for holding a requiem mass in this case, because the man ... dead was a Nihilist. When the late Emperor died, tens of thousands of masses were offered up on his behalf—hundreds of masses are offered up daily still. Now, if an Emperor, the head of the Church so to say, should want such an awful amount of praying for, how much more praying for, in proportion, is needed to get the poor sinner of a Nihilist into Paradise? One would think that if the Russian Government were composed of the really good and pious personages deputed by that flunkey-tourist, Dr. Lansdell, they would deem it a duty to let the friends of a dead Lazarus of a Reformer pray as much as possible for the forgiveness of his sins. Events have proved otherwise. For daring to plan the holding of a religious service openly in the chapel of the military college, a number of students and others have been arrested this week at St. Petersburg, and poor Tchernishevsky will go short of a requiem mass in that quarter. Whether Autocracy will gain by such mean and irreligious

spite against a coffinful of clay is open to question. Meanwhile it has advertised afresh by the act the sad fate of the Reformer in Russia. Tchernishevsky was a Nihilist in the sense that Russians understand the term, that is to say, he was in opposition to Autocracy: "He who is not for me is against me," and "Nihilist" is a convenient term to include all who wish to alter the existing state of affairs, although the significance of the term has been narrowed and perverted in England by ignorant writers. Happily, Mr. George Kennan's admirable articles in the *Century*, which I strongly advise all readers to follow, is educating the public of England and America on this point and throwing a flood of light upon the struggle between Autocracy and the party of Reform. One of the most influential, if not the most influential was Tchernishevsky. The son of a priest at Saratoff, he became a student at the St. Petersburg University just before the Crimean War, and in process of time developed into a journalist and author. As a social reformer, he soon attracted attention, and the monthly review he edited, the *Sovermennik*, became one of the chief organs of the Russian Liberal party. Tchernishevsky displayed wonderful cleverness in conducting the boldest attacks on the old order of things under the very nose of the censor. In a whole article there would often not be a single passage he could run his red pencil through to suppress as being of a dangerous tendency, and yet the article as a whole would increase the infection of Liberalism it was his place to prevent. This is an art which Russians are forced by circumstances to be expert in, and in which they display as much adroitness as some of our skilled journalists, who manage to make the most damaging attacks on individuals in this country without letting themselves in for an action for libel. I would take too much time to explain and define Tchernishevsky's views, but speaking generally he was not more than what we should call a Radical. Mr. John Morley, this week, has made a long speech on reform, without any harm (or any good) being done, which is violently revolutionary alongside many of Tcherneshevsky's writings. However, any criticism of the Government policy is looked upon in Russia with disfavour and dislike, and in process of time the fate befell Tchernishevsky that has befallen almost every Russian literary man this century—his periodical was suppressed and himself locked up. For two years he suffered imprisonment in the Fortress of St. Petersburg—itself a great hardship, apart from the anxiety of the secret legal proceedings, although a light one to the Rev. H. Lansdell, the so-called missionary who, sent out at other people's expense to Siberia, could take the farthings and ha'pence of poor exiles, and spend his own pounds in buying and sending home boxes of expensive curios for himself in England. How could a man of this stamp,

gold in the cash box be tied round with the gold of military lace. At all great ceremonies, social or of the Court, the black coat is the badge of inferiority, though it may cover a Gladstone, a Tennyson, a Darwin, or a Turner. Everywhere God Gun is worshipped and deified, while the Pen and the Yard Measure go about humbly muffled in crape. Such a condition of society may be a right, or it may be a wrong one. I am not going to discuss that. It is certainly very pretty to look at, and I confess I like looking at it more than I do at the everlasting black coat and black hat in this country. Why should the people of the world, in proportion as they become more civilized, steep themselves more and more in mourning ? Long may the bright colours of the East defy the preposterous penitential gloom of English garb and English civilization !

In Russia, the best museums are military museums, the palaces are full of pictures of war, the churches and cathedrals are decorated with hundreds, nay thousands, of flags taken from the enemy, besides the keys of fortresses and the batons of captured marshals. Where are our trophies ? Where are the flags taken by Wellington and Nelson, to name no other heroes ? The reader may know, but I do not, nor yet 999 out of every thousand Londoners. Where are the Waterloo guns, and the Trafalgar guns ? Heaven only knows—I do not. In St. Petersburg and Moscow every schoolboy knows the cathedrals and churches that display the flags taken in the wars with the Tartars, the Turks, the Swedes, the French, and the Germans. I know where all the Russian trophies are, but as for the trophies of England, they are lost or unknown, perished of neglect, or scattered about forlornly in cellars, garrets, and ha'penny peep-shows, *alias* "military repositories," to be found in some of our garrison towns. Of their guns the Russians make splendid monumental trophies for their squares, combining a thousand in a group, in an artistic manner impossible in this inartistic country, and decorating their capitals with them in a style calculated to make the tourist feel that the deity of the Government is unquestionably God Gun and no other, while we display an incomparable meanness by allowing the equestrian monument of Wellington in front of the Royal Exchange to stand over and ornament (!) a public urinal. The Russians properly treat their warriors when dead, by not only rearing splendid statues to them, but by also protecting those statues from the bats and the skunks of commerce.

In this country, unless the friends of a great general club together to put up a two-penny effigy in bronze (what a wonderful collection of these wax-works' guys we have in London (!) a warrior stands a chance of getting no statue whatever. Where, for instance, in this great metropolis, is a statue to Clive, the man who gave us India ? If ever there was a man to whom England

is indebted for her prosperity at this hour, that man is Clive; yet a city that can spend £10,000 to rear again an absurd statue to "brandy-faced Nan, and a similar sum to stick up a scare-crow Griffin on the site of Temple Bar, cannot spend a penny to display the gratitude due to Clive of India. Another glaring case of neglect is the oblivion allowed to enshroud the man who gave us Canada, General Wolfe. Where's his statue? How many Londoners know where he is buried? Is even Greenwich conscious of the greatness of the hero whose dust lies in a lonely portion of her parish church? No; if the truth must be told Greenwich is not: the people there are as ignorant of the tomb of Wolfe as the people of Woolwich and Plumstead are of the house on Woolwich Common where "Chinese Gordon" first saw light.

Having expressed his pride at being alive on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of God Gun, the Tzar went on to say: "I sincerely thank you all artillerymen present, *past*" (What did the ghosts of departed gunners in Paradise or perdition think of this reference, I wonder?) "and absent, for your unalterable bravery. I am convinced that our artillery as well as the rest of our army will distinguish itself on the field of battle as before." Very brave and very pretty; but how absurd the continuation: "God grant that this may not happen soon; may the Almighty spare us that heavy trial, but if it comes, then I am persuaded that our brave artillery, with other branches of the army, will maintain the honour of our dear Fatherland." Why should a soldier pray to God that he may never fight? Why, after a life spent in preparing for war, should he beseech the Almighty to spare him the heavy trial of having to face the enemy? No one who knows the brave stalwart Emperor of Russia would accuse Alexander III. of cowardice, but when, in deifying God Gun, he utters such speeches as these, he exposes himself to the charge of being infested with cant. The words that the Tzar made use of would come well from the mouth of a Swiss General, because a Swiss girds on his sword simply to protect his hearth from the covetous stranger and has no thought of glory. But when they are uttered by the epauletted autocrat of 3,000,000 troops, trained to regard military glory as the highest aim of humanity, one feels inclined to put one's finger derisively to one's nose, and ejaculate, with cockney intonation, "Walker!"

No doubt the Tzar himself is not an ardent lover of war. He is not so sentimentally disposed towards peace as the late Frederick of Germany, but he seems to have had his fill of fighting in the last Balkan campaign. Still, though he may not desire to plunge Europe into war to-morrow, he certainly does nothing to promote

the cause of peace, I will go so far as to say absolutely nothing, for since he ascended the throne he has certainly done nothing to make Russia tend more towards pacific pursuits than warlike ones. For instance, many acts of his could be cited for enlarging the army, strengthening its influence, rendering it more powerful at home and abroad, and enriching its resources; but while thus favouring and encouraging the military tendency, not a single measure of his can be named for developing the peaceful element in Russia in similar proportion. The late Emperor Frederick, on the contrary, kept himself in touch with the non-military elements. He encouraged, even to an extent that made him unpopular, the civil forces at work in Germany; whereas the present Tzar has rigorously suppressed them. The literary man, the scientist, the capitalist, and the other civilian types that make up nineteen-twentieths of our social fabric, are looked upon coldly at the Russian Court. Only the devotees of God Gun find themselves welcomed in the sacred circles of Gatchina. When, therefore, the Tzar turns to a swarm of those devotees and exclaims, "Great is God Gun: may the weapons whose 500th anniversary we are celebrating to-day never go off!" he utters a wish so much at variance with the function in hand, and so contrary to his whole policy and life, that it ought to have been laughingly recorded in *Punch* instead of solemnly printed in the *Official Messenger*.

Personally, I am a sworn foe to England's blind adoration of God Gold, and could fill columns of doleful lamentations anent the evil wrought by the general craze for cash. Surely there are other ideals worth living for besides that of making money. In England, all classes are infected by it. Everything is measured by a gold standard You write a book. Nobody asks what its influence is, but puts the question: "What did you make by it?" You paint a picture. People do not concern themselves whether it is a triumph of art or not, but enquire how much is fetched at the dealer's. In every sphere of life, a man's work is measured by his income, and if, for the sake of that work, he is ready, like the great toilers of old, to sacrifice considerations of hard cash, he finds himself neglected and flaunted by the public. One can only adequately realise the intensity of the race for wealth prevalent in England by living for a time in a different condition of society, influenced by other ideals. Such a change of atmosphere is not to be found in this island, for the newspaper and the company prospectus penetrates to every home, and the country is full of jaded sojourners from London who spread the infection wherever they retire to recruit their health. But in a Russian home, above all a provincial home, the ideals and the anxieties are quite different from those of an English household, and I always experience a feeling of relief and rest when Fortune

takes me for a time to Russia. The worship of God Gun may be wrong, nay, it is wrong, horribly wrong according to the political economists, but the cult is pleasanter than the sordid adoration of God Gold. By pleasanter, I mean pleasanter for the stranger, for the non-military classes of Russia, God Gun is a hateful Moloch who devours the liberty of their sons, impoverishes the country by heavy, useless expenditure, places the civilian under the heel of the soldier and policeman, and makes himself odious in innumerable other ways. The stranger does not feel where the shoe pinches, and the shoe looks so pretty that it is difficult for him to realise that corns may be compressed by the attractive military binding. No: Russia is a restful place for a literary man to visit, above all if he understands Russian and is not a slavish worshipper of God Gold; but it is a hell for a literary man to live in. God Gun, great though he may be after his 500 years of existence, is terribly afraid of the inkpot. God Gold, with all his sordid power, allows liberty to the pen, and it is open to any man in this realm, however poor, to strive for the reformation of our civilisation without fear of being treated as worse than a ravisher or murderer. But God Gun, though the glitter on the steel look ever so pretty, enforces his worship on all, and the reformer has no choice between mute acquiescence at home and exile to Siberia.

THE SLAUGHTER AT YAKUTSK.

LONDON, *December 27th, 1889.*

IT will be interesting to watch the fate of the revelation made in the *Times* yesterday, of the ghastly slaughter of the Yakutsk exiles by the military and civil authorities in Siberia. The narrative given, is circumstantial enough, and bears many evidences of being of a genuine character. The *Times* says it is perfectly satisfied as to the authenticity of the information, and in spite of the shock recently administered to its prestige by the Piggot *fiasco*, the general public will probably accept the story as being in all essentials true. And, if true, it certainly places the Russian Government in a decidedly unpleasant position. Before the tribunal of European public opinion, the *Times* arraigns the Tzar as being responsible for the foulest outrage of the year, and insists—and insists rightly—that unless Alexander III. takes instant steps to repudiate all personal sympathy for the crime, and brings the perpetrators to justice, the stigma of guilt

will fasten itself upon his head and render him one of the most barbarous of modern potentates. Reduced to its simplest form, the atrocity exposed in the *Times* is this. A short time ago, thirty political exiles arrived at Yakutsk, bound for the place of their internment. The new Vice-Governor had introduced some fresh rules in his district, which bore hard upon the exiles on the road, and they petitioned for a modification. While awaiting a reply before departure, the house they were in was surrounded by soldiers; their protests were construed into a determination to revolt, and a massacre ensued—six of the exiles being killed and nine wounded. Of the latter, three were subsequently hanged for "insurrection." During the scrimmage, and afterwards, the soldiers behaved with the utmost barbarity. One of the ladies accompanying the exiles they "ripped open with their bayonets." Another poor wretch who was found dying, was flung into the vehicle in which the corpses were taken away, with the brutal remark that he would be dead by the time they got to the grave. The savagery of the soldiers was equalled by the savagery of the civil authorities afterwards. The survivors were hastily tried by a sort of drumhead court-martial, and three condemned to death. One of these was a man too ill to move from his bed, so they put the bed on a conveyance, drove it under the gallows, and hauled him out of it to hang in his night shirt and bandages, upon the fatal beam.

Had such a barbarous outrage been perpetrated in Armenia, all Europe would have clamoured round the Sultan to punish the offender and institute immediate reform. But this is a crime perpetrated in Holy Russia, and the atrocity-mongers are "mum." The people who waxed so furious a few months ago over the outrages of Moussa Bey in Armenia and the Turkish troops in Crete, have looked on with sealed lips since the *Times* published the first account of the Yakutsk massacre in the middle of the present month. Personally, my anger goes out against the evil-doers in all three cases, but I cannot but reserve a certain measure of contemptuous feeling for those exhibitors of English cant, whose names can be found in the columns of the *Times*, and in the journals of the Houses of Parliament, who had so much to say about the half-a-dozen murders in Armenia, and have kept their indignation under hatches while the *Times* has exposed the nine in Siberia. I have no patience with such reprehensible one-sidedness. If a murder is a crime, it ought to be denounced with equal force and indignation by right-minded men, whether the culprit be a Russian, a Turk, a Jew, or a Gentile. Speaking as a layman of the Church of England, I cannot understand that immoral unfairness that can induce the Archbishop of Canterbury to rise in the House of Lords and

solemnly denounce the crimes of Turkish administration in Armenia while conveniently closing both eyes to the revelations made by Mr. Kennan in the *Century* magazine of an infinitely worse state of things prevalent in Siberia.

But is the story true? On this point I cannot express an absolute opinion, because I do not know the sources of the *Times*' information, but the narrative reads like a true one; as regards the names and the incidents mentioned, while anyone who has the slightest acquaintance with police rules in provincial Russia will be aware that there is sufficient brutality in the nature of the police official to crush an imaginary revolt with the ruthlessness described. If it is not true, the Russian Government has itself only to blame that such stories can circulate in Europe, for the Press of Russia is so kept down that incidents whose proportions could be accurately defined and weighed, if news were freely published, as at home, are fated to either die unknown or travel on to the frontier, changed in many cases with a cloud of rumour. The Russian Government, like all despotic Governments, does not understand that it is better that false news should circulate in the Press than out of it. A false story, circulating from mouth to mouth and increasing in magnitude in its progress, may harden into a firm tradition and do infinite harm to States or individuals for want of something to overtake, expose, and kill it. That something is provided by the Press. The moment a false story is published in the newspapers, a platform is provided for those who know it to be untrue to come forward and openly contradict it. In this manner mendacious rumour is quickly scotched, and the political atmosphere cleared of poisonous gases, which in despotic countries, where the press is gagged, breed Nihilism, Socialism, and other diseases dreadful to the bureaucratic mind. Had there been a free press in Russia, the story published in the *Times* ten days ago would, if untrue, have been exposed and destroyed by now; whereas the Russian newspapers have been condemned by the censor to remain silent in regard to it. Now that the fuller narrative is published, the *Times* rightly opines that the issue containing it will have to circulate with the columns devoted to the affair, blackened, and that so far as the public of Russia is concerned, the atrocity will be kept from it. Beyond all doubt, however, the story will create a stir in Europe. This stir will compel the Russian Government, which after all is very sensitive, to take some cognisance of the circulation of the charge against it, and it will have to do this through some official channel that will be discredited by the fact of being official, instead of being able to remain quiet, as the Government would in this country, while public discussion sifted the truth in the press. On such occasions, the Tzar cannot but regret the absence

of a cultured independent press to protect him against slander, if such there be in this case. In all probability the affair will end in the contradictions of the Russian Government being disbelieved, and for a long time to come, Russian administrative methods will remain in discredit.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the publication in the *Times* will fall flat so far as Russia is concerned. Private individuals receiving the *Times* through the post may get their copies blackened, but the Tzar's copy will remain free from expurgation, and as the Tzar reads the *Times* every day, he will certainly become cognizant of what has occurred. And becoming cognizant, he will in turn become responsible unless he disavows the authors, since he will be unable to plead ignorance of the event. Besides the Tzar, the principal Minister will get unexpurgated copies, so will the Ambassadors and many of the newspaper correspondents, while the Russian editors in due course will receive cuttings of the blackened parts in letters from London. These cuttings will enjoy a wide circulation, and thus in Society at St. Petersburg and Moscow the news will get known almost as completely as if it had been actually republished in the Russian Press. In this manner public opinion will be stimulated in Court circles, where, after all, humanitarian feelings prevail, and the higher officials concerned will be pressed into making an inquiry into the affair. Then one of two things will happen—either the Siberian functionaries will be severely punished, or the report will be burked and new fuel provided for the Nihilist propaganda.

Latterly, society at St. Petersburg has been greatly perturbed by two events—the death of Tchernishevsky, the reformer, and the death of Trepoff, ex-Prefect of the Russian capital. The former revived reminiscences of the romantic self-devotion of the Nihilists of 1870, and the latter the heroic exploit of Vera Zassultich. Reminiscences of this sort are always dangerous when society is in a sullen and discontented mood. At present, there are symptoms of a new reaction against the reactionary policy the Tzar has successfully maintained since he ascended the throne. A fresh craving is setting in for reform, and thoughtful men are saying to themselves that if moderate reformers are to be treated as badly as Tchernishevsky, "something ought to be done" to pare the claws of bureaucratic brutality. It will be interesting to watch the effect the *Times'* narrative of the Yakutsk atrocity will exercise upon this movement. My own impression is, that there will be a revival of anti-autocratic opposition of an active character this winter.



WHAT ABOUT THE TZAR

LONDON, *January 2nd, 1890.*

EUROPE is uneasy about the internal condition of Russia. What about the Tzar ?—is a question circulating everywhere in political circles. Rumour hath it that he is ill, and his illness is ascribed to a whole variety of causes, of which the majority imply the agency of his enemies. I can hear of no confirmation of this in revolutionary quarters ; but the Tzar would certainly appear to be seriously out-of-sorts, and more worried for the moment by troubles at home than troubles abroad. Up to now, he has been "like a giant running his course." He has enjoyed the best of vigorous health, he has experienced no opposition to his crushing reactionary policy, and on the whole he has been tolerably well treated by Providence. At present we seem to be witnessing a turn of the tide. Obesity has bred dyspepsia, the worms have begun to wriggle under the heel of the Lord's anointed, and luck seems to have temporarily quitted the gilded haunts of Gatchina. Some time ago I pointed out that the quietude of Russia during the last few years was not so much due to greater love of autocracy as to the fact that autocracy had been rendered easier to bear by the new blood that had flowed into it, when the late Emperor and his *blase régime* had been struck down. Autocracy administered by the young Grand Dukes, Vladimir and Alexai was different from the seething corruption supervised by the old Grand Dukes Nikolé and Constantine. Excluding Count Tolstoi, the ministers of the new sovereign were better men than the ministers of the old. Throughout the service, new officials were introduced, and these new officials effected many useful small reforms. These improvements caused Russia to tolerate the tightening of the autocratic screw. It was thought that as soon as the Emperor felt himself secure on the throne, he would relax a little on the severity. However, years have rolled on, the Emperor has consolidated his position, Russia has recovered her political and financial credit abroad, and the period would appear to be ripe for a display of good nature on the part of the Tzar towards his faithful subjects. Instead, however, of warm-hearted thanks from One man towards the one hundred millions who do him reverence, the people receive nought but frowns. The aspect of the sovereign is always severe. His policy is a policy of frowns unrelieved by a single smile. Whatever the peasants may think, the educated classes are beginning to tire of incessant harshness, and this is leading to a serious display of restlessness at St. Petersburg and Moscow.

If the Tzar were wise he would seize the opportunity and throw a little oil on the waters before the commotion becomes too difficult to deal with. Although people are dissatisfied, they have not yet begun to compromise themselves to any serious extent by participating in secret combinations against the throne. If the winter be allowed to pass without a little Liberal lubrication, the restlessness that at present is chiefly confined to the tongue may assume the form of conspiracy. The reign of terror that prevailed in Russia from 1878 to 1881, can be clearly traced to the harsh enactments against what Russians call the "Intelligence" of the country preceding the Russo-Turkish War. Bureaucrats commonly think they have successfully accomplished their purpose when they suppress public meetings, gag the press and prevent discontent acquiring visible form in public. The case is invariably the reverse. If men are prevented from discussing their grievances, real or imaginary, in public, they will seek to do so in private. Private meetings for the discussion of grievances are in despotic countries regarded as secret conspiracies, whether inoffensive or not. The early reforming circles of 1870 and 1871, were of the most harmless description. They consisted of private meetings of students, literary men and unselfish persons of means, anxious for the welfare of Russia who assembled in small parties to talk over the best way of railing the masses. Could they have held their meetings in public, they would have been as innocuous as the mock Houses of Parliament which in this country amuse local politicians, having a surplus of gaseous talk and useless time to dispose of. Discovered by the police, these students and literary men were treated with extreme harshness. Most of them were kept in prison a year or two, and a large proportion were banished to Siberia. The result was what might have been expected. The fathers, brothers, and friends of the prisoners in many cases were exasperated into becoming conspirators also. This led to further suppressions and increased severity towards the plotters, provoking in turn a wider and wider circle of discontent. The ill-feeling of the intelligent classes spread by degrees to the army and navy. Plot succeeded plot, the contest grew more and more sanguinary, and at length Alexander II. paid the penalty that all men must pay who tie down the safety valve and squat on it. Human nature is pretty much the same all the world over, and the Viceroy of India would probably suffer the same fate if he listened to those heedless advisers who would have him suppress the Congress meetings and gag the native press.

The present Emperor commenced his rule under favourable circumstances, because the plotting had been primarily directed against the person of his father. The new sovereign was assumed

to be innocent of the harshness that had led up to the catastrophe of March 1881. The anger of Russian intelligence was moreover appeased by the death of Alexander II. Eight years have now elapsed, and plenty of time has been given to Alexander III. to settle himself firmly on his throne, and then initiate a period of Liberal reform. The first part of the programme has been achieved, but there are no signs of any intention to undertake the second. Indeed, his policy would appear to be to persist in a reactionary policy of the most frigid character. The people are to be always treated as puppets in the hands of a drill instructor. Such a policy in these days of modern enlightenment, is bound, ultimately, to end in failure. Young Russia is already discontented with the new sovereign, and unless the Tzar be very careful, he will, by his severity, breed a revolt against himself as surely as his unfortunate father did. The sword is unquestionably a mighty weapon, but it readily yields to the corrosive influence of a little ink. No monarch who arrays against him the literature and the press of his country can hope to enjoy a comfortable rule. This is what Alexander III. is doing. He has a contempt for the Press, and strives to prevent the development of any culture except that associated with the sword. Even education has been so manipulated as to prevent if possible the enlightenment of any except certain favoured classes. Fortunately for the world, patriots and reformers are not confined to any special section of society. The spirit of restlessness and innovation infects men of high lineage as well as the humble peasant. During the last reign of terror, men of rank and wealth such as Dubrovin and Krapotkin applied themselves as readily to the formation of opposition of autocratic rule as the "slack baked cranks," of the working classes who had become infected with wild, narrow notions of the blessings procurable by assassination and revolt. There are plenty of similar men in Russia, and although the Tzar would like them to confine their reading to pious stories of sacerdotal saints who sailed down the river Neva on grindstones, they find more congenial matter in the naratives of the unselfishness of Dubrovin and the tragic career of Sophie Perovsky.

This week a blow has been struck at Stasulevitch, by the popular editor of the monthly magazine, *Vestnik Europi*, a periodical of exceedingly wild views, and enjoying a wide circulation in Russia. If such a man as he cannot escape suppression, the moderate thinkers of Russia may well despair of being allowed any voice at all, while the present *régime* lasts. Stasulevitch is what we should term a Conservative, and he has always held aloof from anything approaching the revolutionary taint. The Russian Government, however, now demands obedience of a mediæval character from the most enlightened of its subjects as well as from

the brute Buriats in Siberia. Hence the stir at St. Petersburg, and the almost daily reports of plots and arrests reaching Berlin and Vienna from the agitated centres of Russia.

LONDON *January 9th, 1890.*

Mr. Gladstone has been "drawn" on the question of the slaughter in Siberia, and the answer is what might have been expected from that quarter. To a correspondent he admitted that "the statement in the *Times* is of the gravest character and consequence;" but with amusing forgetfulness of the course he pursued in the case of the Bulgarian atrocities, he went on to say, in a second communication, having evaded the point at issue in the first, that "my practice has been to wait for authentic statements, or until opportunity has been given for denial or explanation before presuming to take steps. I entirely agree with you that one rule and principle ought to be applied to every case." In yesterday's *Times* I pointed out that Mr. Gladstone had not followed this rule in the case of Turkey. In 1876 he commenced his crusade on the mere hearsay rumours of frenzied foreigners, without waiting for authentic statements, or giving the Turks time to explain. Subsequently, is is quite true, many of the atrocities were proved to the hilt; but that was long after Mr. Gladstone went "on the rampage." On this occasion, not only has he failed to take the slightest notice of the *Times'* narratives, but also the damning indictment of Mr. George Kennan, which has been appearing in the *Century* magazine during the last year. The Howard Association has called public attention to those articles, and in America meetings have been held to denounce the outrage exposed by Mr. Kennan. All this while Mr. Gladstone has remained "mum," and with him every prominent personage who took part in the atrocity agitation of 1876. After this, how can the Liberal and the Radical parties of England escape the charge of political cant? If it was the duty of England to protest against the Turkish cruelties of 1876, on humanitarian grounds, it must be her duty to protest for the same reason against the Russian atrocities of 1888. Nay, there is a greater cause for protest to-day, because the Bulgarian atrocities were chiefly committed by ill-controlled Circassians who had been turned out of their homes in Akazia ten years earlier by the Russians under circumstances of great barbarity, and took their revenge on the Bulgarians to spite their old enemies. The Russian cruelties, on the other hand, are those of controlable brutal bureaucrats, whose intolerance of opposition and reform can only be checked by the persistent application of European public opinion. One of the stock arguments of Mr. Gladstone in 1876 was that the Russians were amenable to

European public opinion, whereas the Turks were not, and that therefore it was essential to have recourse to coercion to restrain them from acts of a barbarous character. Coercion being inadmissible in case of Russia, it is all the more necessary that the leaders of public opinion should speak out with no uncertain voice against the [illegible]. The very fact that the Russian Government is sensitive to European opinion should encourage such a professed humanitarian as Mr. Gladstone to apply it on behalf of the exiles in Siberia. That he does not do so, nor yet any other leaders of the Radicals, is only one more evidence of the policy of pusillanimous expediency that now prevails with that important party of the English State.

Some time ago the question arose whether Pashino, the Russian spy—who visited India in 1878 with the intention of reaching Kabul *viâ* Peshawur, and acting as interpreter to the Stolietoff Mission—really was dead or not, an Indian paper having noted his existence a second time in India, while an Odessa paper chronicled his decease. It now appears that the former was right, Pashino being at present at St. Petersburg, where he is contributing occasional articles to the local *Viedo Mosti.* In one of these he says that he secretly saw the Ameer at Rawalpindi, and that latter, after kissing him, asked him to settle at Kabul as adviser with a salary of 3,000 rupees—a statement which, to do the Russian press credit, has been received with expressions of ridicule and incredulity.



ALL ABOUT RUSSIA.



LONDON, *February 13th, 1890.*

INTELLIGENCE received from Baku to-day states that the winter in the Caspian has been a cold and disagreeable one, and that sickness has been extremely rife. Russian peasants are accustomed to severe weather, but even they complaim that the winter in the Turkoman region is harder to bear than their own. In the interior of Russia wind is relatively rare in winter. Long spells of calm frosty weather alternate with heavy snow storms, the latter of which are often welcomed, because they fill up the ruts and provide the Commune with a fresh set of level roads. But in the Turkoman region during the winter months there is a constant succession of piercing winds, which seem to gather increased intensity in passing over the sandy desert, and are rarely softened by a fall of flaky snow. So that the recruits for the Transcaspian Army, who have been making their way to Merv and beyond since the beginning of December, have had a decidedly bad time of it. The route

followed from the Russian recruiting centres to the Transcaspian region has been *viâ* Odessa, Batoum and Baku. From December 23 to January 23 (both old style) the local newspaper *Caspian* states, that 2,714 recruits passed through Baku on their way to Turkmenia. Most of them have been conveyed across the Caspian in special steamers.

According to a Sarakhs correspondent of the *Tiflis Kavkaz*, life on the Afghan frontier is terribly dull. Sarakhs is bad enough, but the garrison there is larger than at the outposts, and has been amusing itself with theatricals, with the soldiers as performers. No doubt the Persians from the fort across the river, and the local Sarik Turkomans greatly enjoyed the spectacle. At Pul-i-Khatun he mentions that there is at present stationed one company of the 5th Rifle Battalion (the rest being at Sarakhs) and a sotnya of Cossacks of the 1st Caucasian Cavalry Regiment, the rest of which are at Merv. Latterly several valuable antiquities have been found and forwarded to General Komaroff's private museum at Askabad. The post from Russia only arrives at Pul-i-Khatun once a month, and sometimes even at longer intervals. But this is not remarkable. The Russian Post Office is swaddled in red tape, and in point of enterprise is about on a par with our War Office. When I was at St. Petersburg last I lived close to the head office—the St. Martin's Le Grand of Russia, where I really believe fewer stamps were retailed than at the little post office of many an English village. I know that whenever I asked for five shillings' worth of stamps, the uniformed functionary used to unlock his stamp box with a distracted air while an order for ten shillings' worth appeared to cause a famine in the establishment. Compare this with what is common in this country. The other day wanting to despatch off some pamphlets, I sent to a post office near by, located in a grocer's shop and asked for five pounds' worth of half-penny stamps—2,400 altogether. My messenger received 1,500 at once, and the balance was forwarded from the head local office in ten minutes, accompanied by the offer to send a postman in a cab for the batch when ready. Had I attempted to purchase such a number at St. Petersburg, I should have been arrested on the spot as a dangerous lunatic. So that it is not wonderful that the poor soldiers at Pul-i-Khatun get letters and papers only once a month, notwithstanding that a native *djigit* could do the distance between it and the Transcaspian Railway in two or three days with the greatest ease.

Some of the Russian colonists who emigrated to the Transcaspian region last year and the year before, are returning home. They dislike the country, and the limited area open to agriculture. In general the Russian element does not appear to be increasing

greatly. In trade the Russians are beaten by the Armenians and Persians, who everywhere control commerce. This is perhaps natural, as the latter are indigenous to the Caspian region, where the Russian trader feels himself a foreigner, except at the larger mercantile points. On the other hand, there is still a stream of colonisation in progress towards Central Asia. A Vladikavkaz paper mentions that a band of Servian refugees passed there the other day, on the way to Merv; curious that home troubles in the Balkan peninsula should have driven Servians to the Afghan frontier. At Merv they will mingle with the Chinese brought from Kuloja and Kashgar to labour on the irrigation works at Sultan-i-Bend. In process of time there will be a nice little jumble of races in the Merv Oasis. Unless they fight better than at home, I do not think the Afghan will have much to fear of these Servian settlers.

General Annenkoff has returned to St. Petersburg from the Turkistan region where he left his subordinates busily pushing on the Transcaspian Railway to Tashkend. The new Governor-General of Turkistan has not yet left the Russian capital for his post. The investigation into Colonel Alikhanoff's delinquence is proceeding. The Press has not been allowed to comment upon the affair. Gospodin Buetsoff, the new Russian Minister at Teheran, should have arrived at his post by now. During the diplomatic interregnum Gospodin Podgio, first secretary, who had been left in charge, died very suddenly. His widow has since returned to Russia, passing on the way Gospodin Speyer, his successor. The latter's last appointment was at first secretary to the Russian Mission in Japan. The balance sheet of the firm of Kudrin & Co., which has been trading in a very vigorous fashion in the Turkoman region, has just been published. It reveals a heavy loss.

A letter from Resht states that the severe weather has temporarily put a stop to the construction of the Teheran Railway. The works in hand previously extended from Amoul to the port of Hassan Abad. About twenty miles of levelling has been accomplished and eight miles of train line put down: great delay has been caused by the non-arrival of railway material from Belgium. This is largely due to the eternal block on the Transcaspian Railway, consequent on the excessive petroleum traffic. The landing arrangements for the material have also been defective, in consequence of which there have been extensive losses on the Persian coast. It is to be hoped that things will improve before the arrival of the forty case of treasures belonging to the Shah, purchased or presented to him in Europe, which passed through Odessa a few days ago. The chief internal piece of news this week is the issue of the new Russian loan. The moment is an auspicious one for conversion operations. Last year Russia was successful enough, but the rise

in the rate of exchange in the interval make a difference of 7 per cent in her favour. When I was in Russia, two years ago, I had the pleasure of paying only eighteen pence for every paper rouble I wished to obtain at St. Petersburg. The price of commodities and things in Russia not having risen, each eighteen pence turned into a rouble was capable of purchasing the value of about half a crown. Affairs are now reversed. The rouble has risen in value to the extent of eight pence, and this week, in paying the bill for my yearly subscription to various Russian newspapers, the exchange value of the rouble was reckoned at 2-2d. The new fourteen million loan is to be called "The Second Conversion Loan," that of last year being denominated the First. Both, however, are to be extinguished on the same date, last year's loan running eighty-one years and this year's eighty. The new loan will convert the fifty-million-rouble loan of 1855, floated during the Crimean War at a cost of 5½ per cent, and the two Anglo-Dutch loans floated during the Polish troubles at a cost of 6 per cent. The present fourteen million sterling, raised to wipe them out, will not cost the State much more than 4½ per cent. Consequently the conversion will effect a considerable economy to the Russian Exchequer.

Although the loan is being raised at St. Petersburg, Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam and London, the Russian Minister of Finance has evidently fixed his eye on the French investor in making his arrangements, the value of the bonds being in round figures in French currency only. Thus the French bonds are of the value of 500 francs, 2,500 francs, and 12,500 francs, whereas the English equivalents are £19,156 ; £98,176 ; and £49,176, respectively, amounts very awkward for market quotation. The Dutch and German equivalents are equally inconvenient. However, it is not likely that the Germans will invest largely in these Russian bonds, nor yet the English investor. Once upon a time Russian stocks were a favourite investment for those people who buy bonds to lay them up in lavender. At the time of the Russo-Turkish War, England's holding of Russian stocks was extremely large. Even the shrinkage in value during the war did not much diminish the total held. The Nihilist trouble, however, exercised a profound influence; and, under the conviction that for many years Russian affairs would be turblent at home and abroad, the public gradually allowed the Germans to relieve them of a large proportion of their holding. Since then Russian credit has gone up, but Russian investments are no more popular now than they were five years ago. A few bankers and brokers may break the ice on this occasion and speculate a bit : but the forecast may be confidently hazarded that the public generally will not rush in to subscribe heavily for the Russian loan.

The terrible boiler accident on board the Barraconta has caused an outcry in the press against the constant break-downs of the machinery on board English men-of-war. It may be a slight consolation to know that foreign navies are no better off in this respect, and the St. Petersburg newspapers contain bitter complaints about the alleged defects of Russian men-of-war engined by English firms. The fact of the matter is, these failures are due to the antagonism between the points of view of shipbuilder and marine engineer existing in all countries. The naval architect designs the hull, and in trying to make it as strong as possible and accommodate the heavy weights enforced by turrets, monster guns and leviathan shot and shell, cuts down the space at the disposition of the marine engineer to such an extent that it is simply impossible for the latter to guarantee effective engines. I have taken personal part in some of these contests between naval architects and marine engineers, and am not speaking without a certain knowledge of the subject when I express the conviction that the break-downs and failures common in our fleet to-day will not cease until the designing of the whole structure, inside and out, is placed under the control of one man, and that man the marine engineer. The conflict between ship-designer and marine engineer is an old one, but it is rapidly reaching a climax. From designing the ships throughout and everything in it, the naval architect has gradually yielded to the marine engineer, until at present he really does little more than design the shell. Circumstances, however, have served to render him the official superior of the marine engineer, and the latter still holds a subordinate position although modern vessels are simply boxes of machinery, and the success of the ship dependent upon its engines. Anyone who is conversant with the capacity of engineers in general, and of the engineers who design and construct marine engines in particular, will bear me out that an engineer who can plan the innumerable engines that now-a-days fill up the inside of a ship possesses sufficient skill and mental capacity to design the shell as well. This is an opinion that is gaining ground in engineering circles, and the sooner the designing and building of ships, inside and out, passes completely into the hands of the engineer, the better for the war ships of the world generally.

The report I have received to-day of the annual meeting of the St. Petersburg Slavonic Society under the presidency of Count Ignatieff, states that the subscriptions received last year amounted to over £3,000; a new branch society, recently started at Moscow, forwarded £600 to be distributed among the suffering Slavs. It is the almanack just issued by this society that has caused so much excitement on the Balkan peninsula, the

"specialists," as the Count called them in his speech who had prepared the accompanying map of the Slav peoples, having redistributed the boundaries of Bulgaria, Servia and Roumania in a manner that has caused great offence. I should imagine that the chief "specialist" in the preparation of this map was Count Ignatieff himself. Having no official duties to occupy his busy, energetic mind, he exerts himself to the utmost in his private capacity to stir the dust in the Balkan peninsula. If the truth were known of the various plots that have distracted Bulgaria and Servia of late years, the world would probably be astonished at the extensive part played by the Count in their inception. Luckily they have been all failures.

ENGLAND ON THE HOWL.

LONDON, *March 7th, 1890.*

THE recent revelations in the *Times* respecting the political atrocities in Russia, although they have failed to draw that leathery old Jesuit, Mr. Gladstone, have succeeded in arousing sufficient public feeling to lead to the formation of several societies charged with the duty of trying to ameliorate the lot of the "prisoners and captives" in Russia. On Sunday there is to be a great meeting in Hyde Park, at which a number of Russian refugees are to be present. In London and at Newcastle the printing press is hard at work turning out tracts and pamphlets, to be circulated on behalf of the suffering Russian reformers in Siberia. As yet no great political names have associated themselves with the movement, but they will probably come in later on. For the moment no political capital is to be made out of baiting the Russian Tzar, and men of the Harcourt or Morley stamp, therefore, evade and avoid any association with the protests now being raised. Such Radicals are wise in their own generation, but to the outsider their conduct is suggestive of the most unmitigated cant. Everybody remembers how England went on the howl over the Bulgarian atrocities. Humanitarians of every party and creed rampaged against the unspeakable Turk. Mr. Gladstone invoked the Divine Figure from the North to take in hand the task of vengance, and was not content until the Cossack was set loose to work devilries equally atrocious upon the Mussulmans of Bulgaria. When Mr. Schuyler, the American writer, and one or two others proceeded to point out that Russia had been guilty of many a bloody massacre in her time, Mr. Gladstone fell foul of them in the *Times*, although

if there is any fact in history better established than any other, it is that if the Russians had not by barbarous cruelties expelled the Abkhazians during the sixties from the Caucasus, there would have been no Bulgarian atrocities, since it was the circumstance of those expelled nomads happening to be at the Sultan's disposal, and nourishing feelings of wild revenge that led to the great Balkan catastrophe. A few years ago, when Russia commenced ill-treating the Bulgarians and kidnapped their Prince, the refusal of Mr. Gladstone to make any effort to protect his former proteges convicted him, in public estimation, of having in 1876 traded on the atrocities for purely personal aims of a selfish character. It was seen that there was no real love of humanity in the man. The crusade of the Liberals against despotism was a mere sham. More recent events have justified this opinion, and if the atrocities in Bulgaria were to be repeated fifty times over in Siberia, the probability, nay moral certainty, is that Mr. Gladstone would continue to the last to remain "mum."

However, although the Irish question is interminable, and the *Times* serves up two-thirds of its paper with Home Rule matter the public is pretty well sick of, we cannot have the Grand Old Man much longer with us. In Radical circles he is looked upon as a lapsing factor in politics, and already the policy of the party is being recast without any reference to his views. The newer Radicals do not consider themselves bound by Gladstonian inconsistencies. The honor of the Radicals is one thing; the honour, or dishonour of Mr. Gladstone quite another. It is the rising Radicalism, or, if you like, the Radical tail, that is taking up the Russian atrocities. For the moment the head of the party is stiff, glacialized by the Grand Old Man, but before long I feel convinced the tail will wag it. It will become a plank of the Radical platform to sympathize with the Russian party of reform, and, for various reasons, I believe that the plank will become a permanent one. Some of those reasons I will endeavour to give.

In the first place the present policy of the Tzar cannot be possibly carried on without the Russian administrative machinery turning out an increasing crop of malcontents yearly. Modern enlightenment reaches Russia in all manner of ways and will not allow the educated public of that country to remain satisfied with a Jack Frost policy of the middle ages. The ancestors of the modern Russian bore the despotism of their princes pretty tamely; but the violent deaths of many of the latter showed that the scoring was not all on one side. It is a well-known fact in Russia that the moment a man becomes educated he is not to be implicity relied upon as a tame and humble servant of the State. The peasant who reads is not half so loyal as the peasant who remains ignorant of

letters. The peasant who comes to town and turns workman becomes in a couple of years, in five cases out of six, a discontented politician, often of the narrowest Nihilist type. As for the cultured classes, one has only to mix with them—I do not mean as an ignorant tourist, but as a friend conversant with the inner life of the country—to discover that criticism runs more against the Tzar than in favour of him. It is out of these elements that the atrocities spring. An educated peasant caught speaking favourably of the republican institutions of France, perhaps not in the least disloyally, is pounced upon by a zealous police officer, and is deported straightway without trial to Siberia. Here, it will be seen, is a political victim at once. When he arrives in Siberia he is animated by fury against the State, and if he some day escapes and makes his way to St. Petersburg he is probably quite ready to join in any plot to assassinate the Tzar.

Take another typical case. A party of students assemble in the evening in the lodgings of one of their number, and discuss among other things the present and future of Russia. Such a theme naturally rises when young men having grown tired of talking university "shop" and exhausted all that is to be said for the moment about literature and science and, I may add, wine and women, young men are mostly advanced in their views, and it is not surprising if some of them are heretical in regard to the Divine origin of autocracy. I have taken part in many of these meetings myself, where over unlimited lager beer or jorums of chocolate, a change to the interminable tea, I daresay I have expressed opinions as rash and as euthusiastic as any revolutionary of to-day. If the talk was wild no active harm to the State was meant, and I believe most of us really thought more of airing our own cleverness than doing any injury to autocracy. I'll confess, at least as regards myself, that the most revolutionary talk at night did not prevent me wishing the next day, as the Emperor dashed past in his sledge along the Nevsky, that something might happen that might enable me to save his life and earn one or two of those lovely stars and crosses which distinguished Russians desport upon their breast. Those were my salad days, when I dreamed of great things and hoped for ultimate internment in Westminster Abbey. Fell pessimism has swept away those glorious visions, and I now even find fault with the Abbey as being inconveniently packed and a trifle too warm. What has become of the wild *harum scarum* student friends who used to plan the reconstruction of Russia? Each time I go to Russia I find fewer kindly hearts to greet me as of old, and more than one good fellow, I fear, to rotting his life away in the mines of Siberia. Although in most countries such casual gatherings would have been ignored by the

State, in Russia they were distinctly illegal, and it was because they were illegal I think that the lager beer tasted better in a crowded chamber reeking with smoke, with doors and windows shut to keep in the conversation than at the more commodious Bier Halle not far off.

Every year the police drop upon such harmless supper parties; and woe betide all who are caught red-handed. Many a student has been exiled to Siberia for attending such a meeting, and has been turned from a possible useful citizen into a passionate revolutionary. Every week in Russia men are arrested on suspicion of being hostile to the State, and without public trial are deported thousands of miles from their home. Injustices of this kind cannot be inflicted on one man without making a dozen who knew him discontented with the State. In this manner the present policy of the Tzar is breeding a new generation of Nihilists, who will one of these days be large enough in numbers to organize afresh a Reign of Terror. The present Emperor has been given a deal of rope, and he has pretty well used up most of it. Unless I am mistaken the apparent tranquility of his rule will not remain much longer unchallenged.

Of late years the Russian revolutionaries have had to work against heavy opposition at home and abroad. In their early conspiracies against the late Tzar they enjoyed a good deal of sympathy and support in Europe. They moved about Europe freely; they had convenient headquarters at Zurich, and could even collect in Germany on the very rim of the Russian frontier without fear of being extradited. Even during the reign of terror they enjoyed a deal of sympathy in Europe, but the Socialist attempts against the person of the Kaiser Wilhelm, and the dynamite plots in London rendered revolutionary methods odious. When they blew up Alexander II., they naturally suffered from the reactions; and Europe was deaf not only to the refugees in her cities, but also to the exiles in Siberia. A sham account of their life there by that mountebank missionary, the Rev. H. Lansdell, increased the Nihilist depression. No one would listen to what the exiles or the refugees had to say. This period is now ending. European feeling is rising fast against the present policy of the Tzar, and the aims of the party of reform are being sympathetically discussed. This tendency is bound to exercise in turn a powerful influence on the Russian refugees and exiles. It will invigorate them to a fresh struggle against the Tzar, and I shall not be at all surprised if public subscriptions are not raised to promote the movement. If this induces the Russian Government to reform some of its abuses and treat the political prisoners a little more humanely, the demonstrations in England and America will be worth the time

and money spent upon them. As for causing the Emperor to recast his policy of stiffening Russia with mediæval starch, I do not . they will have the slightest effect in this respect.

THE OVER-SEA COLONISATION OF SIBERIA.

LONDON, *March 14th, 1890.*

A FEW days ago a very interesting lecture was delivered before the Members of the Ethnographical Section of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society on "Russian Emigrants to the Ussuri Region." The lecturer was Dr. A. B. Elisaeff, an enterprising geographer, whose last exploit but one was to explore the Tigris and Euphrates valleys, in 1887, in the interest of the Russian Government. Last year he took a private trip to the Pacific, and in his lecture puts on record impressions of the wretched system of administrative colonisation in vogue, which have caused a deal of talk at St. Petersburg. The Ussuri region, with its magnificent part of Vladivostock, was wheeled or wrestled from China by Count Ignatieff in 1859. The following year colonisatian commenced, but the movement was chiefly a private one, and only a few peasants pushed their migration across Siberia as far as the Pacific coast. A little later some Cossacks were sent to form frontier settlements, and hundreds of Ural Cossacks were exiled thither in 1875 for making a demonstration against new military laws. In the main, however, Russia contented herself with the establishment of the naval station at Vladivostock, and left the interior to look after itself. When the Turkish War occurred, Russians regarded Vladivostock as lost. The squadron in the Pacific was a weak one ; the supply of coal was short, and the defences at Vladivostock so inadequate to the size of the place that an expedition from England or India would have easily captured the port. Throughout the spring of 1878 the Russians were in a funk about Vladivostock, and the moment the war was over they proceeded to revise their defences in the Pacific, and put them in proper order. Two dangers had to be guarded against—the descent of an Anglo-Indian expedition, and the increasing preponderance of the Chinese population. The first was guarded against by an immense expenditure on the littoral fortifications, and the second by a prohibition against any more Chinese entering the country, coupled with its colonisation by Russian peasants on a definite plan.

The first ship load went out in 1883. Since then every season two hundred and fifty peasant families have been sent out at Government cost, while assisted passages have been granted in certain cases where village communities have petitioned to be allowed to despatch batches of surplus members of the commune to the Far East. Both at Odessa and at Vladivostock the emigrants have been under the guidance of local government committees, who have supplied them with clothing and implements, and assigned their locations in the Ussuri Valley. Up to now upwards of 16,000 Russians have reached the Pacific in this manner. Unlike our emigrants, who are encouraged to spread over the land, the Russian settlers have been confined in settlements, after the model of the communal villages at home. At present there are sixty of these peasant settlements, and twelve Cossack *stanitzas* in the Ussuri region. Most of the colonists are Little Russians from the crowded districts of Poltava and Tchernigoff. Their land locations are mostly in splendid country, but the sites of the villages are often so badly selected that death is terribly rife among them. Children in particular perish in large numbers in consequence of the exposure, bad food and the absence of good sanitary arrangements. According to Dr. Elisaeff a heavy death-rate commences from the very departure of the colonists from Odessa. He ought to know, as he went out with an emigrant ship, and saw with his own eyes evidence of over-crowding, foul atmosphere, bad food, and other defects of the colonising system. On the voyage the emigrants broke out in revolt, declaring they were being starved and poisoned. The relations between them and the officials were such that Dr. Elisaeff, being mistaken for one, in the course of making friendly enquiries was grossly insulted. When told they would find *Tchinovinks* in the new land they were greatly disappointed. They had hoped to be their own masters. At Vladivostock things were even worse. Barracks for the new-comers existed, but the arrangements generally were so defective that the arrivals were decimated before starting for the interior. On the journey many perished of fatigue and fever. Still, in spite of all this dreadful maladministration, it would appear that once settled down, and over the first troubles of colonisation, the peasants—if they survive the ordeal—thrive in the new country. The birth-rate is high, and helps to cover much of the mortality. All the same, a thorough reform of the colonising system is needed, and, thanks to Elisaeff and other denouncers of the existing evil, it will probably take place before the next emigration season be ushered in. The Government pays too much for each settler sent out to disregard the voices raised against ignorant, corrupt and incompetent officials. But one cannot help the reflection that if the free and loyal peasants of

Russia are treated in this inhumanly careless fashion on board the emigrant ships from Odessa, what must be the fate of the chained and manacled convicts and political exiles who are sent by the same route in the same ships to the penal settlements on the Island of Saghalien? Spontaneous over-sea emigration to the Pacific does not seem likely to flourish as it has done between England and her colonies. There is not sufficient traffic between Odessa and Vladivostock, and competition enough between the few vessels running out, to promote cheap fares such as prevail at all our ports as well as those of the Continent. The cost of the railway journey to Odessa and the voyage beyond amount to a sum sufficient to deter any ordinary peasant from thinking of going to the Pacific by water. On this account he does one of two things—he either travels by road to the provinces bordering on the Black Sea or Caucasus in the hope of finding cheap land, or he makes his way straight for Siberia, settling wherever he can after he gets across the Urals. A few of these in process of time make their way to the Pacific, but the number is very limited. This state of things will change when the Siberian Railway is constructed. In all likelihood cheap fares for emigrants will be adopted by the Government and the colonisation of the Ussuri region will proceed more rapidly than it does at present. But it will be another ten years before St. Petersburg and Vladivostock will be united by railway, during which period there will be such ample time to colonise British Columbia that we may hope hereafter to maintain a great preponderance in European population on our side of the Pacific compared with Russia on the other.

One thing we have in the meanwhile in our favour. We have not a population of several hundred million Celestials in proximity to our Canadian Empire. Neighbouring rivals we have, in the shape of the Americans; but there is a vital difference between an adjustment of interests between the Canadians and the Yanks and between the Russians and the Chinese. It is possible to imagine a disappearance of the Canadian frontier line and an amalgamation of the interests of Canada and the States on a basis positively advantageous to the mother country, although I hope that such a union may be long deferred; but there can be no reconciliation of racial interests between the teeming millions of Chinese on one side of the Siberian frontier and the few thousand Russians on the other. It is a notorious fact that the Chinese race is increasing and expanding. Every year the population spreads outwards more and more towards the Siberian frontier. If it were not that the Cossacks are allowed to shoot down like dogs the Chinese caught crossing the frontier, the Russian population would be overwhelmed in a few years. Even as it is, the Chinese emigrants steal past the

cordon, and after many days are suddenly discovered far north of the frontier, settled down in comfortable communities, and as much at home in the Amoor forests as if they and their ancestors had been on the spot a thousand years. In his new book on *Problems of Greater Britain*, Sir Charles Dilke dilates on the many dangers the Canadians have to guard against in the future to avoid being annexed by the States, but there is not one so terrible as the possibility that the Russians may be swept back and wiped out from the Pacific by a future avalanche of Celestials. This is a bugbear disturbing every Russian Governor of the Amoor.

There are rumours current at St. Petersburg this week of a complete reorganization of the Transcaspian province. Komaroff's resignation is to follow Alikanoff's withdrawal, and General Kouropakin is to be appointed the new Governor. Kouropakin was the clever assistant to Skobeleff at Geok Tepe, and has long been regarded the most promising officer of the Russian army. I hardly believe the rumour of his appointment myself, because he is too valuable a man to send from his present billet in West Russia to a not-over-particularly healthy region where there is nothing to require exceptional ability just now. There are plenty of less distinguished officers who could replace Komaroff and Alikhanoff without any particular loss to the Russian forces assembled on the Austro-German frontier.

The *Times* published a good article the other day enumerating the Russian forces actually assembled, evidently written by a military man, for it contained an outrageous puff of the Intelligence Branch here, coupled with many contemptuous allusions to the journalists of Berlin and Vienna for occasioning the war scares a year or two ago. The writer of the article overlooked that the easy chair officers of our home Intelligence Branch have months and even years to collect their information before publishing a line of it, whereas the correspondents at the European capitals have to telegraph their news, gathered hastily and with difficulty, every night. Any long-eared individual can be wise after the event, but it was really too absurd to hint that the Intelligence Branch knew all about what was going on two or three years ago, and would, if in the possession of the wires at Berlin and Vienna, have made fewer mistakes than the newspaper correspondents there. So far from the war scares of that poriod being the product of over-imaginative correspondents, they caused—and this is a matter of incontrovertible history—the most serious alarm to the Governments of Germany and Austria. While Russia was making her moves of men towards the frontier, Europe could not tell what her game was. The speeches of the period of Bismarck, to say nothing of the other statesmen of Germany and Austria, reveal distinct traces of alarm

and Bismarck is too well-in-formed to be frightened by newspaper rumours, while the claims of prescience put forward by this puffer of the Intelligence Branch trench on the region of absurdity if he really thought our War Office knew more about what Russia was aiming at and doing than the Intelligence Branches of Berlin and Vienna. Judging from the reports and maps of our Intelligence Branch that occasionally see the light, or are glanced at privately by those competent to criticise them, our military information bureau has yet much ground to cover before it can be compared with those on the Continent. Meanwhile, it owes, as it always must, most of its tips to the press.

BOMBARDING A PUDDLE.

LONDON, *March 28th, 1890.*

ANYONE familiar with student-life in Russia must feel quite as much amused as excited, by the telegram this week announcing the suppression by the armed forces of St. Petersburg of the splutter at the University. That Cossacks with whips and sabres, and infantry with ball cartridge and bayonets should be sent to coerce a parcel of half-starved youths, provided with no weapons save in a lamentably few cases, with a sinewy pair of wrists, seems such an absurd application of steam-hammer force to crack a wee Barcelona nut, that one looks at the telegram again to see whether it is not a joke in *Punch* instead of a serious political communication from the Argus-eyed agency of Reuter. Unfortunately this is not the first time the University on the Vasilli Ostrof has been occupied by troops. A couple of years ago there was a similar outbreak, and a similar suppression. During the late Emperor's reign there was a demonstration every term, and one of them —the demonstration on the steps of the Kazan Cathedral— has acquired historical significance. It is the normal condition of the Russian student to be revolutionary, and he has the courage of his convictions. I mentioned the other day that it is rare that noblemen or wealthy bureaucrats send their sons to the University. The young men that assemble there come from the incipient middle class—the poorer landowners or officials, the professional men, and merchants and manufacturers. A large proportion are poor, and the scholarships, although numerous, are rarely lucrative enough to keep a man without means from seeking exterior support. Hence most of them eke out an income by "giving lessons," and at any hour of the day wolf-eyed young

men may be seen rushing about from house to house, intent on the task of educating the sons of those wealthy Russians who prefer that the training of their children should take place at home. During one brief period of my varied career, which a nasty second attack of Russian influenza on both lungs is endeavouring to shorten, I myself "give lessons" at St. Petersburg, and had occasion to mix a good deal with the young men who subsequently took part in the restlessness against the late Emperor. The conviction I carried away from this intercourse was, that if the Russian Government took pains to fill the stomachs as well as the brains of the University students, there would be far less heard of the revolutionary demonstrations of the latter.

The hungry man is a dangerous man in every State. If I could draw I would sketch some of the representative scenes I have witnessed of want and emaciation among the Russian students that would stir the most callous heart. Men of the beggar type of student are often so physically stunted through want of food that a single unarmed Cossack would be a match for a score of them. Latterly there has been a certain amount of weeding, but still the hungry student is a common type at St. Petersburg. If, on the occasion of the recent outbreak, the Emperor had despatched against them a good dinner, instead of a force of cavalry and infantry, the malcontents would have gone over *en masse* to the enemy, and yielded to the blandishments of beer where they raged and fumed at the bayonet.

The student demonstrations prove once more that the modern Government of Russia is incapable of managing the higher education of the people. The soldiers and the clerks with epaulettes on their shoulders, who rule Russia, try in vain to frame the studies of the Russian youth so as to make them the equal in learning of foreign students, while, at the same time, preserving their minds in the pipe-clayed condition of their own. The two things are incompatible. The knowledge requisite to make a man a doctor, a lawyer, a mining engineer, an author, or a chemist cannot be imparted by the methods of the drill sergeants. Ten thousand ignorant soldiers can be easily drilled to move their arms and legs simultaneously, and to believe, because the Tzar believes, that St. Nicholas once sailed down the river Neva on a grind-stone; but ten men cannot be trained by any conceivable method of education into becoming good engineers, doctors, chemists, or mathematicians without their fingers flying to their nose whenever the miracle is solemnly mentioned.

Herein lies the gist of the struggle between autocracy and modern progress. To be logical, the Russian Government ought to do away with universities altogether. Unfortunately for itself, it

cannot do this, because it is impossible to turn men into doctors, engineers, and so forth by simply moving their arms and legs, and as the bravest soldiers and the wisest bureaucrats cannot dispense with the professional classes, the Russian Government is compelled to allow the universities to exist, and the result is that every college and seminary in Russia, however carefully the Censor may exclude all dangerous books, is a focus of restlessness that causes everlasting uneasiness to the authorities. The late Minister of the Interior, Count Tolstoi, strove, by placing under a ban several hundred wellknown modern university classics, such as the works of Adam Smith, Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, Darwin, etc., and by ordering the time of the students instead to be given to the classical writers of Greece and Rome, to convert the student into a tame and antiquated indiyidual; but the experiment has failed. Before the police went round with their wagons to strip the public libraries of these modern works, the activity of the printing press and the ravenous appetite of educated Russians for the latest results of European culture, had led to such a widespread diffusion of the prohibited books, that it is was impossible for the Government to recall all the seed it had previously allowed to be freely cast over Russia. It was easy for the police to seize a score or so of *The Wealth of Nations* in the public libraries, but it was impossible for them to lay their hands on all the fifty or sixty thousand copies of that work that had previously been sold and scattered about the Empire. And thus it is, that, although the names of Adam Smith or Herbert Spencer must not be mentioned by the professors to their students, the latter have no difficulty in getting access to secreted copies of their works, notwithstanding the penalty attaching to the possession of them. One has only to glance at the list of books commonly used by the average university student, to realise, how utterly impossible it is to weed out of them all thoughts and suggestions calculated to make the youth sceptical of the divine right of despotic government in Russia. Even if it were possible, there would still remain the foreign press which is everlastingly inoculating Russians with the revolutionary virus. Hardly a foreign newspaper appears without containing something to unsettle the Russian who reads it. Place any day's issue of the *Times* in the hands of a man trained to believe in the infallibility of a man of Russo-Greek religion, the divine right of the Tzar, the illimitable wisdom of the Russian Government, and the necessity for every individual to be the slave of the State, and he will be sure to find something somewhere or other, in a leader or a paragraph, a letter or a speech, calculated to provoke a spirit of criticism, and unsettle the firmest convictions drilled into the most obedient mind. Once upon a time the Papist priest was in terror if he saw a man reading the Bible. Now-a-days thrones are rocked by the widespread perusal of the newspaper.

Some months ago I made a forecast that the winter would not pass without turbulence at St. Petersburg. The tip did not come to me from any ardent revolutionist, but was a deduction from the aspect and tendency of things in Russia. Since then Nihilists have been arrested in the vicinity of the Palace; plots among military men have been discovered; Madame Tsctrebrikova has caused almost as much sensation as Vera Zassulitch by branding the Tzar before all the world as a tyrant, and a general restlessness has set in, of which the student outbreak is only one of the many symptoms. Apparently Russia is on the eve of another reign of terror. Firmly believing that the late Emperor brought on the Nihilist troubles of 1878-82 by coquetting with liberal principles, Alexander III. is not likely to suddenly abandon his reactionary policy. He is apparently determined to try the experiment of doggedly sitting on the safety valve. It is a pity, because in these days of ours such a policy can only have one ending—the "busting" of the sitter.

RUSSIA AND THE CASPIAN.

LONDON, *May 23rd, 1890.*

As usual in the spring, great activity prevails in the Caspian region, and the railways and steamers are hastening to make good the waste of time occasioned by the enforced lethargy of an Arctic winter. Komaroff has quitted Askabad carrying with him numerous addresses and good wishes, and the officials in the Transcaspian territory are awaiting with a certain amount of anxiety the new Governor, who is vested with full powers to make the most sweeping changes. Meanwhile all manner of improvements are to be made along the Transcaspian railway, including the renewal of nearly half the bridge over the Oxus and the construction of a new outlet line to Krasnovodsk, and new barracks are to be erected at different points for the troops stationed in the Turkoman country. Tenders for these are publicly invited at Baku and Tiflis. Among some of them that have reached me, I note barracks for three sotnias of the Taman Cossack Regiment at Askabad, barracks for two companies of infantry at Merv, and hospital accommodation at Rahka. More permanent barracks for troops are also to be erected at Sarakhs and Penjdeh. The reconstruction of the Oxus bridge has been necessitated by the weakness of the existing structure, and the fresh channels carved out by the river Oxus. That stream has been always famous for its coquettish character. You find it running in one channel one year and in

quite another the next. The result is scarcely satisfactory either for permanent structures that try to bridge it, or for the steamers put on to run between Khiva and Kilif ferry.

The Russian papers have been discussing afresh the possibility of turning the Oxus into the Caspian. The controversy was started by Gospodin Semenoff in the *Moscow Gazette*, and proved such a congenial topic that a whole mound of cuttings lie before me, the accumulated clippings of articles that have appeared during the last few weeks in the Russian press. I refrain from inflicting on your readers *data* which, however original, could hardly interest them at a moment when Central Asia as a subject is considered flat. I therefore confine myself to a few generalizations. It seems pretty well proved that a considerable proportion of the Oxus water could be diverted towards the Caspian, without materially injuring Khiva, but it is doubtful whether the waterway would be deep enough for navigable purposes. It is very properly pointed out, however, that from the point of view of irrigation it would be well worth while to turn a stream of water from Chardjui towards Merv and the desert north of Akhal. The effect might be a diminution in area of the Aral Sea of no harm to anybody, while on the other hand millions of acres of splendid soil in touch with Merv and Akhal would be rendered fit for cultivation. This cultivation, if accompanied by the wholesale planting of trees, would increase the rainfall of the region, and Central Asia might become as fruitful and populous as in the olden times when great cities attracted travellers from all parts, and the region was spoken of as the garden of Asia. Such pictures as these appeal strongly to the Russians, and have led to many a spirited article in support of the scheme in the columns of the St. Petersburg, Moscow and Tiflis papers.

While opinions may vary as to the practicability of the Oxus diversion scheme there can be not the least doubt, I think, that in process of time the cultivable area of Turkomania will be largely extended by the simple and unheroic method of storing the autumn rains and winter snows instead of letting the water flow away to the desert and sink in the soil. The Akhal oases is mainly what it is by the systematic erection of dams at different points of the mountain streams to store the water and retain it for summer use. During the frontier feuds between the Persians and the Turkomans these were constantly being destroyed by the former in order to get rid of the manstealers by the simple and summary process of turning their fields into an arid desert. Now that the border has been quiet for five years the ruined dams and reservoirs and underground canals have been restored and repaired, and already the cultivable area of Akhal is one-third larger

than at the time of the Russian conquest. Along the Transcaspian railway artesian borings have been extremely successful, a whole series of new oases having been established in the thirsty desert. Grandiose schemes of irrigation have also been mooted, but beyond carrying out the Tzar's fad on the Murghab the Russian authorities do not seem disposed to incur any heavy expense on this score for the moment. It is quite enough to spend money on the Transcaspian railway just now without burdening Russian finance with any new schemes of a costly character.

A second controversy has raged of late in Russia regarding the best method of joining Transcaucasia with the home network of railways. One party was in favour of a direct line from Vladikavkaz to Tiflis, the other supported the roundabout Vladikavkaz Petrovsk-Baku railway. The objection to the former is the necessity for piercing a whole series of expensive tunnels involving many years' labour and an outlay of £6,000,000. A vigorous writer in one of the St. Petersburg papers has made a most crushing attack against the scheme. He points out that the utmost claimed for it, on strategical grounds, is that it would enable Russia to push ahead into Asia Minor a division of Infantry with corresponding artillery. This, to him, is a mere bagatelle, which he scoffs at in the most amusing manner. "Sixty millions of roubles (£6,000,000) spent in this foolish style would have no effect on the next war, whereas the same amount of money spent on the Black Sea fleet would enable us to dominate the sea and place whatever number of troops we chose wherever they were wanted." He, however, recommends that the expenditure of the six millions should be on the railway from Vladikavkaz to Baku. This would traverse easy country, cost relatively little per mile and be completed in a quarter of the time of the Vladikavkaz-Tiflis scheme. With this view most of the principal Russian papers agree. While the direct Tiflis line would be costly to work and travers a region of rocks, the other railway would not only tap a large area of country already colonized, but on reaching the Caspian at Petrovsk would provide Russia with a new route between East and West, between Samarkhand and Europe, parallel with the Baku-Batoum line. Such a line would come to the aid of the Baku-Batoum railway, which is quite unable to cope with the traffic arising from the Central Asian railway and the oil trade at Baku.

The Prince of Naples seems to have thoroughly enjoyed his trip to Samarkhand. Quite a swarm of scientific and political visitors are expected to use the Transcaspian line during the next holiday season. Cook and Gaye, who, since I advocated in 1883 the tour from London to St. Petersburg, Nijni, Baku, Batoum and Constantinople, as likely to be a popular one, have each taken some

hundreds of tourists to the Caspian region, have not yet included Samarkhand and Bokhara in their regular tours, but I dare say they will in due course. For members of Parliament it promises to be a favourite roaming ground during the vacation season. The trip is an exceedingly easy and pleasant one, the expense is not heavy while the *kudos* is tremendous. A local member who has done the trip to Samarkhand is a match for the Commander-in-Chief in India. The M. P. has been to Central Asia and seen Russia on the spot with his own eyes. Sir Frederick Roberts hasn't. There is a very cruel, but very true, Arab proverb which is not sufficiently well known in this country. It implies in a pithy manner that a visitor to foreign parts may "go a donkey and come back a jackass" I am afraid that this is applicable not only to bumptious M. P.'s who rush during the cool weather to the Caspain region, but also to some of those who pay a visit to India.

All the same I am glad to note that more people visit Russia every year and trust that that country, so charming in summer and autumn, may long continue a favourite roaming ground of tourists. We have a deal to learn from the Russians, even if it be only how to make a decent cup of tea, and such visits promote a feeling of cordiality which is an advantage to both countries. When I first went to Russia few English people spoke the language, and not more than a couple of wretched grammars were available for the student. Now every London publisher seems to have a Russian grammar on his list, while the dictionaries, conversation books, &c., form a respectable library. One of the latest additions is by a neighbour of mine, Doctor Maxwell, who has utilized his knowledge of Russian and other languages, to publish a *Concise International Dictionary of Medical Terms*. This includes Latin, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Russian. In your columns I have frequently pointed out that the two or three hundred English officers who have been liberally paid to learn Russ have practically done nothing to make known Russia to this country. I question whether as many as six have translated books: half that number I think would be nearer the mark. All our translations of Russian novels, so numerous and so popular, have been done by civilians, and mostly in America. Dr. Maxwell, without any subsidy from the State, learnt Russian in order to make himself acquainted with the condition of medical science in that country, and for some time past has been a regular writer to the medical press on the subject. Far more valuable, however, than these fleeting contributions, is the valuable polyglot dictionary he has now produced, and which Messrs. J. and A. Churchill have published in the usual solid manner. Even without Russian it would be valuable enough; with Russian it practically covers the whole of the essential ground of Europe.

In these, days when authors and publishers vie in swamping a newspaper office with new books it is not to be expected that a medical work and a dictionary should attract special notice in columns so overcrowded with matter that they can hardly do justice even to the most popular works. I think, however, Dr. Maxwell's international polyglot dictionary is worthy of a word or two of commendation and praise, and I may be excused, I hope, if I call the attention of the medical authorities of India to it.

PERSECUTING THE JEWS.

EASTBOURNE, *31st July, 1890.*

THE Russian Government cannot but heartily detest the *Times.* It is always conducting some fresh crusade against it. The other day the *Times* thundered against the treatment of political exiles in Siberia. It is now "on the rampage" on behalf of the persecuted Jews. In yesterday's issue it published particulars of a proposed new law, calculated to astonish Christendom, and make the world wonder whether we are living in the 19th Century or in the Middle Ages. The actual text of the law was not given, only an abstract; but the abstract was sufficient to provide matter for the most indignant leading article that has appeared in the *Times* since the day it published the famous Parnell letters in its columns. Yesterday evening every paper followed suit with thunderous articles, and to-day's papers take up the howl against the Tzar of all the Russias. Evidently a stiff crusade has set in against Russia, and that sorely belaboured country is about to be drubbed again by the public opinion of Europe—always ready to scold either Russ or Turk, and remind them of the necessity of conforming with modern humanitarian sentiments. Already the rouble has gone down, and it will go lower, if the great financiers of Europe, mostly Jews, really care for their afflicted brethren. Fortunately for the Russian Government, the conversion of the debt is almost over, otherwise the operations of the Rothschilds in this direction might be brought to a summary close. More than once the ill-will of the great banking firm has made matters awkward for Russia. It is doubtful, owing to the recent rapid growth of non-Hebrew banking houses, whether the Rothschilds could do as much harm to-day as they were able ten or twenty years ago ; still they are always a factor to be reckoned with by the Minister of Finance of Russia.

If I am not mistaken, the hurricane raised by the *Times* will prove to be a storm in a tea cup. That certain edicts are about to be promulgated against the Jews is certain enough, but the *Times* altogether mistakes their purport or exaggerates their severity. To start with the worst of the laws mentioned in the abstract the expulsion of the Jews from villages and off the land—this law, which is treated by the *Times* as implying the rooting up of a vast agricultural community, is really struck at people who refuse to till the soil at all. The *Times* thunders because the Russian Government will not let the Jew continue a peasant. As a matter-of-fact the Russian Government has been striving for centuries to make the Jew turn to agriculture, and is projecting a new law against him because he refuses still to do so. He is to be turned out of villages, not because he farms so well, but because he will not farm at all, and thrives only as usurer, or gin-shop keeper. The right of owning land is to be taken from him, not because he is a successful landowner in the common acceptance of the term, but because he is a non-resident landowner who has gained land by grimy commerce or usury, and sweats everybody who is unfortunate enough to live upon it. In India one of the most troublesome pests is the village money-lender. Against him legislation of a rather lame character has been invoked without any humanitarian outcry, on the part of England. In Russia, one of the most serious problems that has arisen out of the intense agricultural depression produced by American and Indian competition in the corn trade, has been the necessity of relieving in some form or other the peasant from the terrible exaction of the village usurer—who in the majority of instances is a Jew. In a rich country like England, where vested interests are always tenderly treated, it might be easy for the Government to take the burden on itself. In Russia a different state of things prevails, and public sentiment approves of the usurer being the sufferer instead of the struggling State. With regard to the second serious accusation of the *Times*—that the Jews are to be turned out of all the professions, this is apparently an exaggeration of another law the Russian Government has been considering for some time past. During the last few years the Jews have crowded into the medical, legal, mining, engineering and other professions to such an extent that they seem likely to gain a preponderance over the Russians themselves. This state of things is not very pleasing to the Russians, nor, if it existed in England, do I think it would be pleasing to us. How long would the press remain silent if 60 per cent of our lawyers were Jews and 70 per cent of our doctors? I am afraid that the angry feelings against heavy lawyer's and doctor's bills, at present confined to the privacy of the office or the home,

would rage like a torrent against the avarice and greed of the Hebrews, and a demand would go forth for legislation to favour the allegedly more scrupulous Christian. In crowding into those walks of like which involve no exposure of the person, no hard physical work, and no sacrifice to the State, while at the same time affording plenty of open opportunities of making money by those devices in which Jews excel, the Jewish population as Russia has taken advantage of certain conditions of Russian progress, which the Government considers its duty to redress. I consider the interference to be quite justifiable, and doubt very much whether the Russian Government has ever dreamt of such a wholesome expulsion from the professions as is placed to its door by the *Times*.

Compared with Russia, there are so few Jews in England that we have never had the same problem to contend with that the Russians have had. Hence it is sheer cant to claim that because we have settled our little problem satisfactorily, therefore Russia is to blame because hers still remains open. In Russia there are over 4 million Jews, or more than the number of lawless Irishmen we are unable to tranquilise in spite of a free Parliament and boundless wealth. Cultured Jews exist in St. Petersburg and Moscow who would stand comparison with the foremost of the Jewish financiers in London, but the two types most commonly met with are the greedy oppressor and the pauper Jew. The usurer is not a pleasant individual anywhere, and it is not an agreeable task for the local authorities in agricultural Russia to have to aid money-lenders exacting 30 to 60 per cent against hardworking Russian peasants, who have been brought to beggary in most cases through no fault of their own; for these usurers, and they number tens of thousands distributed throughout the length and breadth of Russia, I do not think the English people should have any concern. Whatever measures Russia may adopt to protect the peasants from their rapacity is a purely domestic matter, hardly to require the interference of a country which itself only recently has been inquiring into the malpractices of Jewish sweaters in the East End. "Persecution" of this sort, having for its aim the amelioration of the peasant by providing other agencies than the Jewish money-lender, ought not to be confounded with the riots and plunderings that took place a few years ago. True, the legislation is directed against a race, but have not the Americans legislated against the Chinese, and the Germans against the Poles of Posen? I have never lived among the Chinese, but I should prefer them as fellow citizens to the Jewish usurers I have met in the villages of Russia.

The pauper Jew is equally a disagreeable subject to have inside the Russian confines. The bulk of the Jews in Poland are poor, and they have the misfortune to look it. In this country we see only samples of them, but in Western Russia there are whole provinces populated with these degraded beings. I have travelled in many of the wild outlying districts of Russia and in some of the poorest provinces, but have never visited any district that has left such a disagreeable impression on my mind as the Vistula Valley of Poland. The pauperism of the Jews there, physical, mental, and ecónomical, is appalling. The bad Government of Russia has had something to do with their misery, but only to a trifling extent—the Jews of Poland were a miserable lot when the Russian took them over, and they have done nothing to improve themselves since. If with all our progress the mass of our London Jews swarm, poor and dirty in Whitechapel instead of in Brixton or Belgravia, we ought not to criticise too hardly the Russian Government for not having solved the Jewish question more satisfactorily. As for the hatred between Russian Christian and Russian Jew the feeling would be found to be a natural one by most of our canting humanitarians if they took a journey to the poorer parts of Poland. Personally, I am not a Jew hater. I have many friends among them in this country, and wish the race well, but I must say this, that after living among the various Tartar, Finnish and Slavonic peoples inhabiting Russia, many of them wild and devoid of civilisation, I have never met any people who inspired such distrust, disgust and repugnance as the Jews of Poland. During my stay among them on different occasions I could readily realise how the Russians and Poles could hate such detestable fragments of a great race and manifest their hatred by violent acts. Jews of the Sir Moses Montefiore type are agreeable subjects to deal with; but tens of thousands of Fagins constitute a sickening problem for Russian statesmen, I know that from the broad Christian point of view the lowest of human creatures ought to be kindly treated, but when those prey on people of a higher type, as for instance the town Jews prey on the unfortunate peasants of Poland, some of England's fine sentiment ought to be accorded to the latter.



TIGHT TIMES IN RUSSIA.

LONDON, *October 30th, 1890.*

THE commercial depression which is visiting Russia just now has awakened a fresh outcry at the slowness of railway progress throughout the Empire. The grievance is not a new one, but the effects have not been previously so keenly felt as during the last few years. Russia is, indeed, paying the penalty for maintaining such a vast military and naval expenditure, out of all proportion to the defensive needs of the Empire. Her railway progress is surpassed not only by the United States, but by Australia, by Canada, by South Africa and by India. In the most recent number of the "Journal of the Minister of Railways" of Russia, the Government itself admits this in a series of elaborate statistics. According to these, Belgium has 16·4 kilometres of railways to each 100 square kilometres of country, England 10·1, Holland 8·5, Germany 7 6, Switzerland 7·2, France 6·7, Denmark 5 1, Italy 4·2, Austro-Hungary 3·8, Portugal 2·1, Spain 1·9, Roumania 1·9, Sweden 1·7, Norway 0·5, and Russia 0·5. In this manner the Journal goes on to point out England has 20 times more railways than Russia, Germany 15 times, France 13 times, Italy and Austria 8 times, and so on, in proportion to the area of each country. During the 5 years, from 1884 to 1888, the growth of the Russian railway system was beaten in this fashion by ourselves and the States :—

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION.

Russia	3,643	kilometres.
United States	49,557	,,
Canada	4,902	,,
India	4,809	,,
Australia	4,656	,,

Even in Mexico and in South America railways have been constructed of late years at a rate which puts Russia in the back ground. Her prestige abroad has been saved by the success of the Transcaspian Railway and the commencement of the Siberian line, but at home her progress has been that of the tortoise, in spite of the clamour for easier and cheaper facilities for reaching the outports.

Under her present régime, Russia is at a great disadvantage with the rest of the world in railway construction. Her Government is both poor and proud. The army maintained is so large that everything else is starved to enable it to pay its way, including the construction of public works ; and even of the

sum assigned for railroads a considerable proportion is spent on lines that have only a strategical significance. It is not too much to say that the railway network of Russia has been mainly constructed with more regard for military needs than national necessities. Herein is its disadvantage when compared with the networks of the United States, South America and our Colonies, where the aim has never been of a military character, but to open up the country and place its products—products competing with those of Russia—on the seaboard, as cheaply and as speedily as possible.

Unable itself to build a large mileage of railways yearly, one would have thought recourse would have been had to private and foreign aid ; but since Alexander III. ascended the throne the poilcy of the Government has been against this. The Government does not believe in the foreigner, and refuses to invoke his assistance. No doubt, this is a reaction against the policy of the last reign, when railway concessions were hawked about by the concubines of Grand Dukes, and bargains between foreign capitalists and the Russian Government were made in the boudoirs of the ministers' mistresses. During this period railway loans were issued one after another, with the enterprising audacity of a young colony, and Russian railways raced in every direction from Moscow towards the sea. But while our colonies have mostly got their money's worth for their railway loans, a large proportion of Russia's borrowings vanished into the pockets of concession-hunters, Jewish bankers, Grand Dukes, Ministers, the actresses kept by both, and rascally railway contractors; the result being the well known collapse of the Russian railway service during the Turkish war, and a frightful financial confusion afterwards, involving the taking over of many rotten guaranteed lines and the consolidation of the loans raised to build them. It is easy to realise the anger of the present Tzar—whose purity of morals and honesty have never been questioned—at this state of things, and therein is to be found the key to much of the feeling that prevails in his mind against the monied foreigner.

Under such a ruler Grand Dukes have to be careful of what they are about, and actresses have a limit put to their exploitations. No concessions whatever are to be had, and the gentry who make their fortunes by touting for them give St. Petersburg a wide berth. Russia, were it not for her loans, would be practically off the European money market. The Tzar has virtuaully isolated her from European enterprise, and has set his mind on Russia being opened up solely by Russian capital, skill and energy. Any one who knows the commercial rivalry to which Russia is subjected will recognise in this policy a serious mistake.

English commerce was materially developed by foreign skill, capital and enterprise. The trade of the United States and our colonies has in turn been the handiwork of English skill, capital and enterprise, which we have handed on across the oceans to the new communities that have started there. Even in our present highly developed condition, English trade swarms with foreigners and is inflated with foreign capital. We absorb both and say nothing about it, although there are in London more foreigners than in all the large towns of Russia put together. The result of Russia's disdain for foreign capital and enterprise is what I pointed out the other day. Europe has simply turned her back upon her, and sent her savings to be invested across the sea. Berlin and Paris bankers, who a few years ago would have preferred holding stock in Russian railways, have grown accustomed now to prefer investments in United States, Mexican and South American lines. Enterprising English railway contractors, in common with those of Belgium and Germany, have quite forgotten the existence of Russia—all their business lies in the two Americas and the colonies, and they would be wooed, like the Grand Ducal concubines of the last régime, if Russia wished to tempt them to transfer their operations to her soil again. Apparently, there is no intention of Russia doing this for the moment. The Emperor is reported to have recently said that he preferred Russia to grow slowly than grow rank with foreign aid. There is not much chance of the latter eventuality occurring. It would require a good deal to make Russia boom. Meanwhile the countries across the sea keep booming away, one after another, attracting tens of millions of capital to their shores to be spent on ports and railways. Their prosperity reacts favourably upon the prosperity of England, and she has the satisfaction of knowing that Russia is being hit harder and harder every year by the competition that she is raising up against her beyond the ocean. In a word, the railway policy of Russia is precisely one calculated to benefit this country. If the two Powers are to some day fight for supremacy in the East, it is obviously to our advantage that Russia should grow slowly and our Empire grow fast. Better therefore that English money should be spent in building railways in South Africa, Australia and Canada, rendering us more powerful, than in constructing lines that would open up Russia and enable her to convey her resources more readily to the seat of war. Such railway progress benefits our home trade, while it enables us to weaken Russia materially by underselling her raw products in the European market.

Russia's Chinese policy of exclusiveness has had one disadvantage to ourselves. It has driven the Germans to Africa. Until the last Turkish war London controlled Russian finance. Afterwards

Berlin stepped in, bought up our loans, and became mistress of the Bourse at St. Petersburg. German savings poured in a torrent into Poland, establishing great industrial towns, building industrial railways, purchasing estates and planting colonies. Suddenly, in 1886, Russia, with a strong anti-German policy, threw a dam along the frontier and drove the torrent back. Germany had to find a fresh field for enterprise. The opening up of Russia, which she would have willingly taken up, had been ruthlessly suppressed. France was closed to her on political grounds; no other country in Europe desired development, and Germany, in consequence, sought out a new field of energy in Africa. The world has yet to see what she will do in that direction, but unless disaster blight the present pioneering efforts, we may expect to see the throwing into Africa of a large amount of that energy and capital which has been driven back to Germany from Russia. Possibly this may take place to such an extent that our own operations in East Africa may be out-distanced and endangered, and in that case we should, of course, be a loser to that extent by Russia's anti-German policy.

I do not know any writer who has drawn attention to the fact that the position of economical isolation in which the Tzar is involving Russia is fraught with serious consequences to civilisation. His present policy not only starves public works, but crushes education. The modern peasant of Russia is growing up as ignorant of the world as the ancient Tartar. In the two Americas and our colonies his competitors are educated beings, able to read and write and improve their products, and place them in an ever better, ever cheaper form on the European market. From that market he is becoming more excluded, and can only sell his coarse produce at a price which leaves him little or no margin of profit. In the best of years the Russians are not particularly well fed. If bad years are in store for them, the prospect of Europe having 90 million hungry peasants on its flank is not a pleasant one. Against this Tartar horde of the future, Europe, thanks to the resources which culture can wield against barbarism, may be able to efficiently defend herself; but it is not so easy to be hopeful of Asia. To me it has always seemed more likely that Russia would try and turn us out of India for the sake of a new market to relieve its wretchedness, than that any Emperor should take the task on hand by the light of mythical Peter-the-Great-Wills. The ambition of a Tzar we might hope to stay or turn by skilful diplomacy, but what could the latter do to curb a hungry nation mad with poverty and barbarism, seeking in Asian markets to replace the one in Europe from which the two Americas and our colonies are rapidly excluding it.

RUNNING AWAY FROM RUSSIA.



LONDON, *November 7th, 1890.*

AT one end of the Russian Empire the frontier Cossacks are kept on the alert to shoot down any people who attempt to run into Russia, and at the other end they have their Berdans ready to shoot down any people who try to run out of it. In Eastern Siberia the migrations of the Chinese are cruelly repressed by the border guards. Celestials caught trying to traverse the Amoor frontier and settle on Russian soil are shot down like dogs. At the other extremity of the Empire the vigilance of the guardians of the Russo-German border-line operates in the contrary way. There they keep on the look-out for the bands of peasants that are constantly trying to flee from Russia to the lands beyond the sea. Stopped in their flight, no nonsense is tolerated by the officials. Either the crowd of emigrants must turn back, or else the Cossacks fire into them. Already several fussillades have taken place on the frontier, as the newly-made graves in the neighbouring villages testify. These conflicts have been described by the official press as "fights," but the fighting has been all on one side. There has been no attempt to hurt the frontier guards so far as the peasants have been concerned. They have simply asked to be allowed to pass out of the country. Being in most cases in the majority they have commonly taken advantage of their numbers to try and slip past the Cossacks and escape. It is then that the Berdans have been levelled and the fugitives shot down. The official report of these little massacres never mention more than one or two killed and two or three wounded ; but those who are accustomed to the published lists of Russian casualties in war time know well enough what these figures really mean. In some cases the shooting has acted at once as a deterrent and stopped the emigration, but in others a certain proportion seem to have managed to get across the frontier. This was notably the case in the affair of the 19th of October at the Petrovitsky Post, where more than 100 out of a band of 370 peasants, managed to make good their escape into Germany. The migratory spirit is strongly ingrained in the Russians. It is held to be partly inherited from their ancestors, who wandered over desert and steppe till gradually they settled down in Russia, and is partly ascribed to the climate. I think the latter has a good deal to do with it. The six winters I once spent in Russia were each of them followed by a terrible feeling of restlessness in the spring. The desire to roam and wander when the ice was going and the grass beginning to peep again was almost unconquerable. I never felt that way in this country, perhaps because England is so small that if one attempts to roam

far from one's doorstep he is brought up with a jerk by the encompassing sea. In Russia one can wander a pretty good distance without getting a glimpse of the briny. For men who have been buried during the winter in the forests, it is pleasant to roam away to the open prairie lands of the south, and for those who have almost had the flesh blown off their bones on the steppes it is a relief to visit the forests. Economical conditions favour this roaming. In England where the work people are divorced from the soil, and except where they have acquired a freehold house through the building society are all of them "lacklands" or proletariats, the artisan or mechanic is born in a town and dies in a town, without having any stake or interest in the country. In Russia a working man is first a peasant, and only in a secondary degree a dweller of the town. Though he may be working as a carpenter, boiler-maker, 'hatter,' bus conductor, or yard porter at St. Petersburg or Moscow, he is the owner of "three acres and a cow" in some village or other, perhaps two or three thousand versts off, and to that village he goes from time to time, when want of work, desire of change, or family circumstances suggest a visit. There is thus a constant circulation between town and country, and the spirit of change is gratified to an extent, which would astonish workmen in this country. But wandering in Russia must be of a legal character, or else the offender stands a chance of being popped into prison. The peasant member of a commune must have the permit of his fellow villagers to go to where he wishes to go, or else, devoid of such permit, he is liable to arrest, imprisonment, and deportation back to his village. Hence a man cannot emigrate without the whole village knowing all about it, and then the reasons that weigh with him are apt at times to influence the whole community, and the entire village starts on the trot for Siberia or the Caucasus. If, on the way, vacant ground is found, suitable for settlement, the village comes to an anchor, and the peasants squat down upon it. But in European Russia there is very little land that does not belong to somebody or other, in default of which it belongs to the Crown. Formerly it was easy in Central Russia for roaming communities to discover sites for a new settlement, but the growth of population has of late years led to the general appropriation of the soil in the home province, and now the peasants have to traverse the Urals before land can be found to be had for nothing. This fact not being properly realised by the peasants, or the pinch of poverty at home being unendurable, many of these roaming bands have become absolute paupers, while striving to reach the confines of Siberia, or the Caucasus, and have caused a deal of trouble to the authorities. Last summer there were a number of cases of "caravans" of hunger-maddened peasants pillaging the villages on their road, or bursting into a town in bands of several hundred

famished wretches, clamouring wildly for food and dying in the streets, in some instances before it could be obtained for them. Out of this has sprung a press clamour that either the Government should regulate migration and find lands for villagers needing them, or else put a stop to the roaming altogether. The latter course is easier to recommend than carry out. Russia is so large, and the villages in many districts are so distant from towns or the telegraph wire, that a community may be far on the march before the authorities have heard anything about it. And in attempting to evade the towns and principal lines of communication, the wanderers have repeatedly this year drifted into barren districts and been overtaken with starvation before the officials sent in pursuit could come up with them. In cases of capture there have doubtless been many attempts to resist the order to turn back to the abandoned village, and it would be nothing unusual if the same severity were enforced as on the frontier. Conflicts between authority and the people, however, are not allowed to be mentioned in the provincial press, and it is only from chance sources that one hears of what has occurred. Certainly this year there has been more restlessness among the peasants than for many years past, and the rapidly increasing poverty of certain districts has forced on a desire for emigration which the Government considers so serious that it is now deliberating how to palliate the distress in order to prevent the discontent becoming a political danger.

If the people who tried to run out of Russia were Jews, there would be no guns fired off to stop them. The Russian authorities are only too glad to see a Jew's heels passing over the borderline. The emigrants arrested are either Polish peasants or Little Russians. Most of them are bound for Brazil. Of late Poland has been exploited by fraudulent emigration agents, who have made handsome profits in organizing the flight of the peasants and steering them for the Eden in South America, where the bulk of them are reported to perish. It may, therefore, be a mercy that many of them are stopped on the frontier and sent back to their homes. But it is certainly not nice. No man likes to be chained to the soil against his will, and, after all the wonderful stories he has heard of the Golden Brazils, where summer prevails all the year round, land costs nothing, and oranges can be had for the trouble of picking them off the trees, Poland is not a pleasant place to live in. Napoleon discovered there a fifth element—mud. It always seemed to me that the chief crop of the country was stones. It is the scraggiest part of the Russian empire and a veritable pandemonium of racial hatred. There the Russian hates the Pole, and the Pole detests the Russian, and both execrate and are crushed in turn by the Jew, add to this their mutual hatred

of the interloping German, and a condition of society is revealed which accounts for the eagerness of the peasents to clear out of Russia.

Until now the emgration from Russia to America has not been heavy. Excluding German quakers (Mennonites), insurgent Poles, and refuge Nihilists it has consisted mainly of Jews. From 1820 to 1880 only 84,000 emigrants left Russia for America, or on an average 1,400 a year. From 1880 to 1886 upwards of 100,000 took their departure, being an average of 17,000 a year. The majority were Poles and Jews, the Jews having the preponderance. Perse cution in most cases accounted for their emigration from Russia, and probably in a large number, it was absolutely forced on them by the authorities. But while the Government does not mind losing German quaker colonists and pauper Jews, it strongly objects to the migration beyond the sea of Russian and Polish peasants, unless it be to the Pacific slope of Siberia. For this reason emigration agents in Russia and Poland have to conduct their operations in a clandestine manner, the officers are situated, for the most part, in the German frontier towns, and their emissaries penetrate to the Russian villages in the disguise of pedlars. If the German Government consented, the trade could be easily crushed, by means of simultaneous measures on both sides of the frontier, and probably an arrangement of some sort will be arrived at in time, should the Berlin authorities, for political reasons, deem it expedient to propitiate Russia. Otherwise the movement may be expected to increase owing to the peasantry having become infected with the mania for emigration to America, and the pressure exercised on them by the depression of trade and the other circumstances just mentioned. On their part the German shipping agents naturally desire plenty of emigration traffic for their steamers, while the German Government favours anything that encourages the prosperity of the mercantile marine. Many of the peasant emigrants are poor, but still there are plenty able to pay their passage and prove, in the shape of hard cash, on their arrival in America, that they are not paupers. This class of emigrants the German Government would hardly care to prohibit passing through its territory to its ports, unless there were strong reasons for trying to please Russia by a restrictive order.



PART V.

PETROLEUM.

THE HEAVY OIL LAMP PROBLEM.

ITS IMPORTANCE FOR RUSSIA AND INDIA.

LONDON, *September 7th, 1888.*

THE Imperial Russian Technical Society announces that its international competition for heavy petroleum lamps, which was a special feature of the St. Petersburg Petroleum Exhibition last winter, has been extended to January 13th, 1889, in order to allow of a fresh attempt to carry off the prizes allotted by the Minister of Crown Domains, Senator Ostrovsky. The competition deals with a problem so interesting and important, not only for Russia and India, but for the whole world generally, that I trust to be excused for treating it in detail. Colossal fortunes are concerned in the elucidation of the problem; the future of the petroleum industry of Burma largely depends upon it, and the safety of the public is concerned to an extent dimly appreciated by those who make use of kerosine lamps for the illumination of their households. The prizes, I should remark, are two in number—one of 2,500 roubles (£250) for the best heavy oil lamp for the masses another of 1,000 roubles for the best rich man's lamp, both to burn oil of a specific gravity of ·870 at a temperature of 15 degrees Celsius. The lamps must possess a light of at least 12 candle-power; and the consumption of oil per candle-power must not exceed four grammes an hour. Preference will be given to lamps burning without a glass chimney.

The general public commonly assumes all petroleum oil to be the same, whether bored for and brought to the surface in America, Russia, Burma, or any other part of the world. This is an error. The oil of every country has its own characteristics; and even in every country the oil varies considerably in the districts where it is found, whether far or near to one another. Without dealing with other characteristics, it may be briefly said that experts divide crude oil into two categories—heavy and light—the former title being applied to the oil of Burma, Egypt, and to a degree, Russia; while the petroleum of America belongs to the second category. By a light oil is meant that plenty of lamp oil can be distilled from it. By a heavy oil that it is too charged with dense oil to burn well in lamps. For instance, roughly speaking, Pennsylvanian crude oil yields 70 to 75 gallons of kerosine or lamp oil from every 100 gallons subjected to distillation. The Russian Baku oil, on the

contrary, yields only 30 to 35 gallons of similar kerosine, while the oil of Burma yields even less. This condition of things would give the American refiner a great advantage, were not the supply of crude oil at Baku so copious. America gets more than twice as much lamp oil out of her petroleum as Russia. On the other hand, a single well at Baku spouts more oil in a day some times than all the 25,000 wells of America put together.

Now, after the lamp oil has been taken from the crude oil, the surplus forms benzine, benzoline, and other light oils, and a series of heavy or lubricating oils, terminating with vasleine and *astatki* or refuse for fuel. Of these the most important is lubricating oil for machinery. Millions of gallons of this are used every year, and in its manufacture Russia possesses a great advantage over America, because while the latter, after extracting 75 gallons of lamp oil from 100 gallons of crude, has only 25 gallons left for lubricating oil, the former, after extracting 35 gallons has 65 gallons left for treatment. All the same the world does not want anything like as much lubricating oil as lamp oil, the consumption of which is rapidly approaching one thousand million gallons a year; and thus, however much of her surplus remaining after 35 gallons per 100 gallons of crude have been extracted Russian may use up, there still remains an enormous quantity of oil, too heavy for use in lamps, too good for fuel, which, for want of ready means of utilization, is either barbarously used as fuel, or, more barbarously still, is allowed to flow into the Caspian Sea to get rid of it. Hundreds of millions of gallons of this heavy oil have been thus wasted at Baku during the last few years. If the oil wells of Burma were developed to an extent corresponding with those of Baku, the waste at Yenangyoung would be even greater. Thus India, as well as Russia, is interested in a solution of the problem.

This being clear I will attempt to lay bare the character of the problem. This so-called "heavy" oil is not an oil like treacle, or even like dense machinery oil, but superficially so little removed in appearance from the oil we are accustomed to use, that if ordinary kerosine and " ·870 oil" were placed in glass bottles alongside each other, a casual observer would not detect any difference beyond that in shaking it one would perhaps seem to be more susceptible to agitation than the other. However, if the two oils were put in lamps, one would mount the wick and burn, while the other would remain like a lump at the bottom; and yet not with all lamps, for some lamps exercise a stronger power over oil than others. For instance, a Hink's duplex or double-wick lamp would not burn the heavy oil at all. On the other hand, a Defries' circular wick lamp would burn the oil, yet not with that absolute readiness, under all conditions, which is

essential to the solution of the problem. The Defries lamp is stronger than the Hinks's lamp and quite amazed the experts at the recent Petroleum Exhibition at St. Petersburg by its power over heavy oil. What is wanted is a more powerful lamp still. This, I am persuaded, will be invented before long.

For the moment, the Russian oil is the slave of the American lamp. Paraffin oil came into use about the time of the Crimean War. America afterwards took up the running, beat the Scotch oil, and dominated the whole market of the world. In refining their kerosine the Americans naturally extracted as much out of their raw rock oil as they could Thus there became everywhere used oil of the particular standard they established, and lamps were everywhere invented and made to burn that particular standard of oil. This was an oil of a specific gravity of ·800 to ·810.

Now it is well there should be a clear impression of the weight of different oils. Benzine, which is a very light oil, or rather evaporative spirit, has a specific gravity of ·730 to ·760. American kerosine of ·800 to ·810 specific gravity is heavier than benzine, and has less spirit in it. It is therefore obviously safer to use. Russian kerosine is a little heavier than American, ranging from ·810 to ·820. The heavy kerosine Russia seeks to use is heavier still, ·870, which is nearly as heavy as the crude oil just fresh from the well, ·875 to 888. Now the lower one goes down the scale of weight, the lighter the oil the more the spirit in it, and the more easily it blazes; the higher one goes the more the case is reversed, and the less readily the oil burns or flashes. Paraffin or kerosine (·800 to ·820) is consequently, as everybody knows, safer to store than benzine or benzoline (·730 to ·760) and again machinery or lubricating oil (·884 to ·890) is safer to store than either. If benzoline be put in a lamp it will burn splendidly, but there is so much inflammability in it that is dangerous. On the other hand if machinery oil be put in a lamp it will burn feebly, and the wick will rapidly char, crust and smoke and the light will finally go out. This is caused by the oil being too heavy to rise up the wick. There is plenty of illuminating power in the oil, as is proved by breaking it into bubbles with a jet of steam smashing the drops in percolating from a tube, when it will burn in the furnace with a tremendous blaze ; but the ordinary wick in the ordinary lamp will not pull the light out of the oil, although, as I have said, a Defries lamp, having a candle power of 80 candles will pull it out better than a Duplex lamp of 25 or 30 candle power, one of the reasons being that the suction force exercised by a blaze of 80 candles is obviously stronger than that of a blaze of 25 candles.

As just stated, when the Americans began dominating the world with their oil a quarter of a century ago, they naturally chose a species of lamp oil that could be produced in the greatest quantity from their crude oil, and lamps were everywhere invented to burn that oil. But had Russia been first in the field instead of America, she would have manufactured not the same species of lamp oil as the Americans, of which she can only extract 30 to 35 per cent., but a heavier variety of ·870 specific gravity of which she can extract 70 to 75 per cent. In that case a different kind of lamp would have come into existence, and instead of hundreds of millions of good lamp oil being wasted as heavy oil, unfit for the market, it would have been the standard burning oil throughout the world. And being a heavier oil it would have been an incomparably safer oil than the American kerosine in vogue.'

The question naturally arises Why, has not Russia manufactured this natural variety of oil, and sent it into the market instead of making a kind of oil of which she can only get 30 gallons out of every 100 gallons of crude oil worked up? The reply is simple. When Russia began to send oil into the European market a few years ago, she had to deal with merchants who sold American oil, and a public accustomed to no other; and the former would only buy Russian oil resembling as closely as possible the American article. Russia, therefore, as a newcomer of no reputation, had to yield to the demands of the European market and manufacture lamp oil of the American pattern. At the outset this did not trouble her much; but the larger her output grew the more tremendous became the waste, until it has now attained proportions that give deep concern to the Government as well as the scientific men of Russia. The production of kerosine of the American pattern in Russia last year was over 200 million gallons. Had lamps existed burning the heavier variety natural to Russia, the same amount of crude producing this total of 200 million gallons could have produced nearly 500 millions. In other words there was a sacrifice of 300 million gallons of lamp oil for want of a suitable lamp.

The figures reveal the importance of the problem now awaiting solution. Russia, only a few years ago, the humble competitor of America in the oil trade of the world, is now the equal, and is already declaring her determination not to remain in thraldom to the American type of oil lamp any longer. The feeling is interesting to note, although petroleum merchants may smile at it, because a resolute determination to solve a problem is often half the solution of it. As yet the proper bearings of the problem are quite unknown to European inventors, and even to men of science. In Russia Professor Mendelaieff and other scientific men are constantly discussing it, but Russia is not a country of

inventors, and thus their writings lead to no results in Russia itself, while being entombed in the Russian language they exercise no stimulus on inventors abroad, who moreover have not the pressure of the problem at their back, as in Russia, to force them to exercise their faculties. But if Russia cannot invent she can offer prizes, and any European inventor who should really solve the problem would not only receive the warmest encouragement from the Russian Government, but be assisted in every way by the leading refining houses of Baku. Considering the importance of the problem to India also, the solution of the matter tending to impart an enormous value to the oil deposits of Burma, it would be well if the Indian Government also participated in promoting a solution offering substantial money prizes to successful inventors.

The matter is of particular importance to India for another reason, namely, because a heavy oil is essentially the safest oil to store and use, owing to its giving forth very little inflammable vapour, and on this account it is admirably adapted for a hot climate. Petroleum oil of ·870 specific gravity is safer to store than even colza. Thus while the crude oil of America produces a lamp oil well adapted for temperate climates, the crude oil of Baku and Burma, both situated in hot countries, can produce a special oil designed, as it were by nature, for use in the torrid markets adjacent to them. This is an important fact that should not be lost upon the Government of India. To my mind the problem is by no means extraordinarily difficult of solution. It is a matter that simply rests upon improving lamps. The existing Russian oil exported is heavier than the American—the latter running up to ·810 specific gravity, and the former sometimes above ·820. Speaking generally all lamps burn American oil well, but they do not all do the same in the case of Russian oil. On the other hand while old type lamps burn American oil well and Russian oil not so well, there are new type lamps which not only burn both well but get more light out of a given quantity of Russian oil than out of the American article. Such a lamp is the Defries. Knowing this to be the case, and knowing that the heavier the oil the safer the oil, the Defries Company a year or two ago started selling what they called the Defries safety oil. This had a specific gravity of ·830, which, it will be seen, is a considerable increase on the American lamp oil, ·800 to ·810, and Russian lamp oil, ·810 to ·820, although a deal short of the heavy oil of ·870 specific gravity which the Russian Imperial Technical Society wishes to see utilized. Now this ·830 Defries oil cannot be burnt in any of the ordinary lamps, yet not only does the Defries lamp burn this oil well, but also another heavy oil, called in Russia pyronaft, of ·858 specific gravity, which is more than midway between the Defries ·830 oil

and the ·870 oil, for the consumption of which prizes are offered. I am compelled to quote the Defries lamp and Defries oil in connection with this matter, because in England readers are unaccustomed to heavy oils and heavy oil lamps. In Russia, however, pyronaft or ·858 oil is a marketable commodity, and there are several lamps, such as the Kumberg, &c., which claim to burn it with more or less efficiency. These were exhibited at the St. Petersburg Petroleum Exhibition and three received medals. None of them, however, were able to do more than what the Defries lamp was able to do, and no prize at all was awarded to any lamp competing for ·870 oil. It seems to me, therefore, that the proper course for inventors to pursue is to study the action of a Defries, Kumberg or other Russian heavy oil lamp burning Dufries safety oil, pyronaft, and finally ·870 oil ; and upon their experiments to evolve a lamp to fulfil the conditions laid down by the Imperial Technical Society at St. Petersburg. As inventors have been writing to me as to where these heavy oils should be obtained, it may spare me correspondence if I recommend Messrs. Blumann and Stern, 43, London Wall, London E. C. They are the London Agent of the Baku firm of Shibaeff & Co., the manager of which, Victor Ragozine, is the leading practical authority in Russia on the heavy oil question, and supervises the production of as much heavy oil annually as is turned out by any refinery in the Caspian. In my own mind I am convinced that if English and American inventors only apply themselves to the elucidation of this problem, clarly understanding in advance its conditions, they will solve it in a very short time. The result ought to be a splendid fortune to the inventor, since the invention will bring at once into the market millions of gallons of oil now compelled to run waste at Baku or lie dormant in the bowels of Burma.

ALL BOUND FOR BAKU.

LONDON, *September 28th, 1888.*

IN 1883 when the lately deceased Baku "Oil King," Mr. Ludwig Nobel, was stopping in England for two or three months, I dined with him one afternoon after he had had a long discussion with Sir John Lubbock and Sir Lyon Playfair in regard to the antiquity of the Baku oil-supply and the number of years it might be expected to last. At that time, Baku was hardly known in Europe, and Mr. Nobel had some difficulty in convincing his hearers that the existence of petroleum there could be traced back several thousand years, and that the oozings and gushings had at various

periods been noted to be so large as to warrant the assumption that the great oil fountain I had witnessed that year, the Droojba, spouting during its career 100,000,000 gallons of petroleum, was not of a character to rapidly exhaust the supply, so vast was the latter. The impression was that the Baku oil-supply was quite of recent origin, and that it was due to temporary volcanic causes that had led to the fountain of the previous autumn, but could hardly be expected to be repeated often, and must infallibly soon exhaust the supply. That one well at Baku should produce more oil than all the 25,000 wells in America put together was rather a stiff fact for Sir Lyon Playfair to swallow, his experience being confined to the meagre supply of Scotland and certain parts of the United States. Possibly the volcanic theory was put forward as a polite, scientific way of expressing incredulity in regard to such astonishing copiousness. The sceptical non-scientific man would have simply whistled and ejaculated "Walker." However, whatever may have been the thoughts of his hearers, the discussion had left on his mind the impression that he had not convinced them so completely as he wished, and being a particularly earnest, truthful man himself, he was a little nettled that any doubts should exist as to his accuracy. "You know that Professor Mendalaieff, Professors Lisenko, Markovinkoff, Gulishambaroff, and others have written about the origin of Baku petroleum. Mr. Marvin, 'Do you think that if I had a statement prepared from their works tracing its history, I should convince your countrymen?'" "Certainly not," I replied. "You might just as well invoke Timbuctoo as Markovinkoff and Wagga-Wagga or Wooloomooloo as Gulishambaroff. The fact is that to most Englishmen, outlandish foreign names rather tend to excite ridicule than to command respect. One quotation from Gibbon mentioning Baku would carry more weight than a monograph prepared under the auspices of all the professors in Moscow. A good case can be easily prepared from English sources. That done and your hearers convinced, you will afterwards experience no difficulty in getting them to believe whatever Russian writers may have published on the subject."

The next day I prepared the case for Baku from the English standpoint; and when subsequently Mr. Ludwig Nobel read it he was astonished that "so many" Englishmen had visited the place at different times commencing with Jonas Hanway, nearly a century-and-a-half ago, and ending with Colonel Valentine Baker, Sir F. Goldsmid, Mr. Arthur Arnold, M.P., Mr. Gallenga, of the *Times*, Mr. O'Donovan, and others. Their descriptions, of course, were not very exhaustive, but, with the references of Gibbon and other English or European writers, they proved the continuous character of the copiousness of the Baku supply, and

demonstrated its existence at least 2,000 years ago. A short time afterwards I published the statement in pamphlet form under the title of "Baku, the Petrolia of Europe." Although not exhaustive, it gave a representative list of the Englishmen who had visited Baku up to 1883.

Five years have now elapsed, and it is probably not too much to say that in that period five times as many Englishmen have visited Baku as in the period of a century-and-a-half intervening between the visit of Jonas Hanway and Mr. O'Donovan. What was almost unknown is now so familiar that when I meet a person who says "I am just back from Baku," I hear what I have heard so often that I am afraid my indifference sometimes gives offence. Besides the various members of the Lumsden mission, and Colonel Stewart, representing the London Chamber of Commerce, both England and America have sent consuls there to describe the petroleum region; the all-powerful Standard Oil Company of America has sent thither agent after agent; our London Petroleum Association has despatched Mr. Boverton Redwood, perhaps the best technical expert on petroleum England possesses; while a list of quite thirty or forty names could be compiled of English merchants and manufacturers who have visited Baku, without including the parties of English tourists Messrs. Gaye and Messrs. Cook have repeatedly taken through. The opening of the Transcaspian Railway is now attracting to the Caspian a fresh series of visitors. Colonel Talbot and Mr. Curzon, M. P., are availing themselves of the excursion from Paris to Samarkhand to have a look at the place; Baron Rothschild, from Paris, has already arrived; and the Tzar himself is expected shortly.

To-day I learn that the *Times* has ordered off, by wire, its St. Petersburg correspondent, Mr. Dobson, to describe this visit of the Russian autocrat to the Caucasus. The *Times* is waking up. It was the only English newspaper represented at the opening of the Transcaspian Railway, and will, I understand, be the only one despatching a special to describe the Tzar's tour. Chance letters from casual tourists may perhaps appear in other newspapers; but there is all the difference in the world between such inexperienced effusions and the letters of a trained journalist knowing Russian thoroughly, acquainted personally with the principal Russian personages, and having access to sources of information closed to the mere sightseer. Whether Mr. Curzon and Colonel Talbot will get to Samarkhand at present seems for the moment a matter of doubt. General Annenkoff's attempts to pose before the world as a second Lesseps do not meet with the sympathy of the Russian Government. Rather angry feeling has been caused by the excursion *de luxe* he started at Paris, probably stimulated

by Mr. Dobson's outspoken revelations regarding the sham condition of many parts of the Transcaspian line; and the Russian Government most decidedly objects for the moment having a lot of prying tourists shot down on Central Asia. Hence curt refusals to grant permission to visit Transcaspia and angry protests from stranded tourists. In the end, probably permission will be accorded; but I should not be surprised if General Annenkoff receives a reprimand for what he has done.

I had begun to make preparations for proceeding to the Caucasus myself this week, but a severe cold has settled on my right lung, touching a week spot from which I suffered for six months after the war scare of 1885, and for several weeks my travels will not be far from my study and bedside. This is very disappointing. Of Imperial pageantries I had enough for a lifetime at the Tzar's coronation; but one never tires of the beautiful scenery of the Caucasus; and even Imperial reviews and balls and displays though they bore one, are more tolerable than the fogs that are already beginning to enwrap the metropolis.

Nothing definite is known about the Emperor's programme for the Caucasian tour. To prevent Nihilist plots, his movements are always kept secret until the last moment. As by the time this will have reached you the Tzar should be already in the Caucasus, it is unnecessary to indulge in speculations as to his route and the plentiful crop of rumours attaching thereto. If the latter are to be believed, the visit to Baku will be of considerable political importance as regards Persia, and there is some loose talk about a treaty that is to be signed. The Russian Minister at Teheran will be present at the interview between the Tzar and the Shah's Envoy. The official Tiflis *Kavkaz* reminds its readers for the hundredth time of the sagacity and foresight of Peter the Great, who after the capture of Baku exclaimed—"We have won the key of the Caspian: yonder—pointing towards Asterabad and Herat—lies the road to India."

From the financial point of view, the journey of a Rothschild to Baku is even more important than the visit of the Tsar. Do the Rothschilds intend to repeat the Standard oil monopoly and invest ten or fifteen millions sterling in the oil industry? Up to now they have put in £2,000,000, and have been urged to take over the 600-mile pipe-line concession, which would mean two millions more. Then there are rumours that they would like to buy up the business of the Nobels. This would mean another three millions. Add three more to this, and the Rothschilds would be able to completely "boss" the Russian petroleum industry. One ally, however, is needed to clench the arrangement—the Government of Russia, and the Russian Government is at present not

disposed to allow of a repetition of that monopoly of oil which in America is so hated by the press and public. If anything, the Rothschilds are not favourites, so far as the petroleum business is concerned. The Tiflis *Kavkaz* is continually attacking them, and complaints having been made that Jews were beginning to swarm at Baku, the Governor turned them all out of the town on the occasion of the last fair. In Europe it is too often assumed that, for the sake of the financial support of the Rothschilds, Russia might be tempted to hand over the petroleum industry to them on favourable terms. Such bondage, however, would be both repugnant to Rus sia and undignified, while it is very doubtful whether any financialsupport would recompense her for allowing the petroleum industry to be cramped by a monopoly. All the same, the recent death of Mr. Ludwig Nobel is leading to great changes in the Russian oil business, and it is difficult to be positive as to the future. Progress of every kind is reported at Baku, and the Tzar will find there, instead of a decaying Persian town, a rapidly growing Russian city.

THE MOLOCH OF PARAFFIN.

LONDON, *November 16th, 1888.*

I PROMISED in a recent letter that I would avail myself of the first opportunity of dealing with accidents arising from kerosine or paraffin lamps. What the mortality may be in India I have no means of knowing, for only occasional cases reported in the Indian press meet my eye; but in this country the number of deaths nearly approaches three hundred a year, and the mortality is rapidly increasing. To put a stop to this frightful holocaust, I commenced two years ago a crusade against dangerous lamps, which, I am glad to say, has been productive of important results, and is likely to lead to a law to suppress them at no distant date. How I came to be what is called an "expert in lamps" is easily explained. In preparing my "Russians at Merv and Herat," in 1883, I devoted a chapter to the "Political Bearings of Baku Oil." In this I traced the development of the then almost unknown petroleum industry of the Caspian, and prognosticated (what has since been amply realised) that the influence the rapid growth of the Russian oil trade would have on the material power of Russia in the Caspian Sea would prove more important than even the conquest of the Turkomans. This chapter led to many inquiries from persons interested in oil; and to meet those inquiries I studied more closely the Russian oil trade, and afterwards by degrees the oil trade of the world

generally. Thus, without any design or any particular love of the subject, I became a constant writer on petroleum, and my opinion was sought privately by persons having a commercial interest in the industry. While events were running their course in this direction, I was asked by the *Lancet* to prepare a special popular account of hospital life on behalf of the Hospital Sunday Fund. This led to my spending nearly a month in the various hospitals of the metropolis, where I was astonished to find so many patients suffering from the effects of mineral oil accidents. An investigation into lamp accidents followed; and finding that the evil was entirely due to the dangerous types of lamps in use, I determined (as one whose writings were causing people to use oil more and more) to conduct an agitation to suppress those lamps and enforce the manufacture of safety ones. The first step was the publication of "The Moloch of Paraffin," a pamphlet in which I illustrated the dangers of the principal types of lamps in use. This was well received by the press, was translated into Russian, attained an issue of over thirty thousand copies, was republished in several newspapers, and recently was placed on the streets at a penny. In general I never have the slightest trouble in fixing titles for my works; but in this case a good crusading title involved a deal of thinking, and in the preliminary notice in the *Athenæum* the pamphlet was heralded as "The Moloch of Mineral Oil Illumination." This was too long, of course, even if more accurate; and finally I selected "The Moloch of Paraffin"—a title which has enjoyed a very satisfactory amount of success. The press took to it at once, and regularly chronicled lamp accidents under the heading "Another Victim to the Moloch of Paraffin." "Moloch" became quite a fashionable word. Several novelists adopted it in their titles. When Lord Iddesleigh died, a London daily newspaper declared that he had fallen a "victim to the Moloch of Ministerial responsibility." Other writers followed this cue; and quite recently I was interested to find James Payn, the novelist, telling a yarn in the *Illustrated London News* in which some one was "sacrificed to the Moloch of Mathematics."

As I expected, the lamp trade at Birmingham was furious at the publication of my pamphlet. The smaller firms rattled epithets upon my head, and after a number of very hot controversies, one of the leading firms, Messrs. Hinks and Son, flung down a challenge. I picked it up at once, asking them to swear an affidavit that their glass reservoir duplex lamps, which they were advertising as "absolutely safe under any circumstances," really were safe (a thing they refused to do); and at this juncture, when the conflict was at its climax, a bridegroom was killed in Birminghan itself by an exploding lamp under circumstances so horrible that, in face of the

public indignation aroused thereby, the manufacturers thought it advisable to "shut up" for the moment. I thereupon recommended that, if they were dissatisfied with the verdict on their lamps I had pronounced in "The Moloch of Paraffin," they should submit them to a totally independent tribunal—the Imperial Russian Technical Society, then organizing a Petroleum Exhibition at St. Petersburg. They did so. The result was unexpectedly encouraging. Not a single lamp I had denounced in "The Moloch of Paraffin" received any award; and the only medal for safety lamps was assigned to the very lamp—the Defries—which I had singled out as the only one absolutely safe. Considering that Russian, as well as German, French, and other lamps competed for this medal, the fact that the Defries safety lamp should have beaten all the lamps in Europe was a success of the highest order, and ratified my judgment in a remarkable degree. Although the Defries lamp was the only one that received the gold medal at the Inventions Exhibition in London two years earlier, still this and other competitions were quite different from that of the Imperial Technical Society, because for the first time in the history of petroleum a purely scientific body "sat upon" the world's lamps, to use a legal phrase; and to employ the phrase again in its colloquial sense, it "sat upon" the whole of them in a manner which had never been thought conceivable by manufacturers before. However the snub was efficacious. Messrs. Hinks and Company, whose really very fine display of art lamps, fitted with extinguishers and other gear, had received only a paltry honourable mention, immediately advertised that they intended to bring out a new lamp, totally different from their old duplex, or double burner lamp, with its glass reservoir; and other Birmingham houses are following their example. The Birmingham firms, though they abuse, yet hear me. Improvements in the direction of safety are continuous; but it is only in response to the lash, for every lamp case of note that comes to my knowledge is made a subject of local agitation, and the provincial press, the coroners, and the doctors are becoming so well educated in what constitutes safety, that the older types of lamps are beginning to have a very bad time of it indeed. To the honour of Birmingham itself, it must be pointed out, that the abuses of the lamp trade are in no wise encouraged on the spot. The Birmingham Town Council, in its fire report a short time ago, urged a law to put down trashy lamps. More recently the matter was discussed with indignant expressions against lamp-makers by the Birmingham Trade Council; while, from the outset, Mr. Chamberlain's organ, the *Birmingham Daily Post*, a paper with which I have never had any connection, direct or indirect, has again and again preached in favour of a law to put down dangerous lamps.

Why such a law is absolutely necessary will be presently explained. First let me point out the two commonest causes of lamp accidents—the smashing of the glass or China reservoir, consequent upon the upsetting of the lamp, and explosions occasioned in blowing the light out down the chimney. Several years ago the Metropolitan Board of Works urgently recommended in a special circular that only metal reservoirs should be used. The trade took no notice of it. Then Sir Frederick Abel and Mr. Boverton Redwood, chemist to the Petroleum Association, jointly addressed a letter to the London press, urging that metal, and metal only, should be used. The trade took no notice of that. Then "The Moloch of Paraffin" joined in with a universal denunciation, and the trade began to get angry. Then the Russian Government refused to give a medal for safety to any lamp with a glass reservoir at the international competition at St. Petersburg; and immediately on top of this condemnation followed that of the German Government, whose Standards Commission a month later insisted that metal, and metal only, should be used. These expressions of opinion rammed home time after time are beginning to tell upon Birmingham. When I issued my "Moloch of Paraffin," it was simply impossible to buy all metal lamps in the suburbs of London, and in London itself 90 per cent. of the lamps sold were of China and glass. Now every shop sells metal lamps, and although in poorer neighbourhoods glass and China still prevail, the masses can choose between safety and danger—a thing impossible before. But however cheaply a manufacturer may work, it is absolutely impossible to turn out a metal reservoir as cheap as the flimsy glass lamps imported by hundreds of thousands from Germany. Hence metal lamps cannot drive glass and China ones from the market, unless aided by a law. To enforce the use of safety lamps in mines, where the death-rate from all causes was only one hundred and forty-seven last year, we have stringent laws and a staff of inspectors. Yet nothing is done to protect the masses against dangerous lamps that roast alive nearly three hundred people a year in England alone, of which number nearly two hundred are killed entirely through the use of glass reservoir lamps, fitted with single and double wick burners.

The only excuse put forward by makers of crystal glass reservoirs on their behalf is that they keep the oil cooler than metal. Granted, but if a burner is so defective in design that it is only safe so long as the oil is cool, it ought to be suppressed in turn. I have in fornt of me now a lamp that killed a man a fortnight ago. The wick had been turned low some time, and had heated the glass reservoir. When the man took it off the table and slopped the oil about, the lamp blew up, striking him with such force as to render him

insensible, and in the morning he was found lying with his breast burnt through, while one arm, which had been burnt completely off, was lying on the ceiling below; the fire having made a hole in the flooring. In another case, a very notorious one, a Mrs. Caroline Hall was carrying a duplex, or double burner-lamp with a glass reservoir (a type largely sold, I believe, in India), when it blew up, tore open her breasts and cheeks, and set the exposed bleeding flesh on fire. As a rule, however, explosions occur chiefly in blowing down the chimney; and since a metal reservoir will not remedy this evil, it follows that it is no use having a metal lamp unless it contains a safe burner also. A mere extinguisher will not make a lamp safe, because an ignorant person may blow down the chimney unaware of its existence, or the gas may be ignited even in removing the lamp from one end of the table to another.

To be perfectly safe, a lamp must fulfil the following conditions:—It must have a metal reservoir and a burner that will not encourage an explosion, whether if blown down upon, or if the lamp be carried about, or if the oil heat up to boiling point, or if even that heated oil be of the most dangerous description. The latter is an all-essential condition, for no ordinary person is a judge of good and bad oil, and he may be deceived by the shopkeeper, even if he pays a good price for it. Hence the safety of the lamp must be wholly independent of the oil, and a lamp that cannot stand the test of filling it with boiling oil of the worst description, lighting the wick, and then knocking the lamp off the table, is not fit to be used in any household. If upset, no oil should run out of a lamp except by slow-oozing through the wick, and the light should be instantly extinguished the moment of capsizing. These conditions, which I laid down in the standard of safety formulated in "The Moloch of Paraffin," are neither ideal nor difficult to fulfil. Hence the argument, that if capable of fulfilment by one type of lamp, they ought to be fulfilled by all under pain of suppression. That this is not impossible is shown by the fact that recently that standard was attained by a new type of lamp—Notley's "Artisan" lamp, constructed on a totally different principle from the Defries "Sepulchre" type. In the case of the latter, the wick is enclosed in two cylinders, and the burner is so designed that no oil runs out, no communication can take place between the flame and the gas in the reservior (hence it can be safely blown out), while if upset, the light, although of from forty to one hundred candle-power, is instantly extinguished, notwithstanding that no extinguisher encumbers the lamp. In the case of the Notley, a loose extinguisher does all that the Shaftesbury lamp does without the gear of the latter, and it possesses what the latter lacks—a metal tube inside, wholly enclosing the wick, and prevents both

the oil from running out and an explosion occurring if the wick be blown upon by a person ignorant of the existence of the extinguisher. As the "Sepulchre" system is not easily adapted to cheap lamps, the Defries Company was shrewd enough to buy up the "Notley" patent, which is applicable to lamps as cheap as eighteen-pence, and in this manner the Company can now cater for all classes instead of for the rich only, as was the case when "The Moloch of Paraffin" came out two years ago. The safety medal of the Imperial Russian Technical Society covered both these types of lamps. Of course, I do not propose that Parliament should render the use of any particular maker's lamp obligatory. Parliament could never tolerate such a monopoly, however good the lamp. What I contend is that manufacturers who make lamps notoriously dangerous (in the trade they are known as death-traps), and refuse to improve them, should be suppressed; while it should be made a penal offence to sell as safety lamps flimsy glass lamps, fitted with a single safety appliance, such as an extinguisher, all the other elements of danger being left undiminished in the lamp. The latter is very important, because since public opinion became aroused, many unscrupulous manufacturers have taken to advertising glass and China lamps, fitted with an extinguisher (costing a penny or two-pence to make) as "absolutely safe under every conceivable circumstance," which is simply a fraud. At present the Government have a Petroleum Storage Bill in hand, and I have every reason to believe that a clause will be added to this dealing with accidents from lamps, clearly now that three hundred persons meet with an agonizing death every year, while at least ten times that number are admitted patients in hospitals, it is high time that something were done, either by a law, or at least by a Government inquiry into the matter. As yet I have avoided any premature action in Parliament for fear of forcing the Government to a declaration of policy from which they might refuse to withdraw. All the same, while waiting for the Petroleum Storage Bill to be introduced, I have kept the press simmering to such an extent that the whole of the manufacturers at Birmingham are compelled to keep on improving their lamps. My policy in this respect is short and plain. All lamps in China or glass, even expensive ones with the crystal glass reservoirs, are denounced as dangerous; while I refuse to give any recommendation for safety to any lamp until it "toes the line" with the Defries and Notley. If I mention that the Notley patent actually went begging before it was taken up by the Defries Company, I give an idea of the difficulty inventors of really safe lamps experience in trying to get their inventions taken up by the conservative manufacturers at Birmingham. So long as they can make money out of a dangerous lamp, they will spend nothing to improve it, and to my knowledge several inventors have had doleful experiences in

attempting to get unquestionable good ideas taken up by the trade. One of them at last, in despair, sent his invention to America to be manufactured. This is why, pending the passing of a law, I keep on continually touching up the trade with the whip. It forces on improvements, and when finally Parliament does legislate, there will probably be so many lamps sufficiently safe that the makers will even themselves support my proposed law, so far as it concerns the bugbear of the trade—the jerry lampmaker—who turns out the fragile glass articles sold in all poor neighbourhoods. The mere passing of a clause suppressing glass lamps would save nearly two hundred lives a year, at present destroyed by the smashing of these flimsy articles; and this I mean to agitate for the moment the Bill comes before the House.

A COMMISSION ON PARAFFIN LAMPS.

LONDON, *January 18th, 1889.*

THE most interesting event of the week so far as I am personally concerned has been the appointment by the Government of a Commission to report upon the Paraffin lamps at present in use. It has taken two years' persistent agitation to bring about this investigation, which I have every reason to believe will result in the passing of an effective law next Session. It was in the summer of 1886 that I first gave my attention to the subject. The sights I had seen in the London hospitals, in visiting them for the purpose of writing a pamphlet on behalf of the Hospital Sunday Fund, fixed my determination to start and maintain a crusade against dangerous types of lamps, until I had brought about a Government investigation, leading either to a reform on the part of the lampmakers, or else a compulsory safety law. Strange as it may seem, although over a hundred persons were known to be burnt to death yearly in the United Kingdom through the use of lamps notorious in the trade as dangerous, no expert had raised his voice on behalf of a standard of safety, if one excludes the "fifteen recommendations" issued by the Metropolitan Board of Works from the pen Sir F. Abel and Mr. Boverton Redwood. Whenever a lamp accident occurred, the blame was generally saddled by coroner, lamp-maker, and newspaper upon the wretched sufferer, who was censured for "carelessness," "want of caution," and so forth. Finding by investigation that nearly all the lamps in use were dangerous in some particular or other, it seemed to me a monstrous shame that lamp-makers should be allowed to put insecure oil-burners in

circulation, and then blame the public if accidents arose from the ill-design or bad workmanship of Birmingham. As one lamp—the Defries—had been declared perfectly safe by Sir F. Abel and Mr. Redwood, thereby proving that absolute safety was attainable, I argued that if other lamps now dangerous could be rendered also absolutely safe by similar improvements, they should be rendered such by law, if the manufacturers refused of their own free will to make their productions safe. This view was cordially accepted by the provincial press, and by degrees as paper after paper became educated, an amount of public pressure was generated which enforced improvement by frightening the public from having dangerous lamps, and after an agitation of two years has at length compelled the Government to appoint a Commission composed of Sir F. Abel and Mr. Redwood, who will report to Colonel Majendie, the framer of the Petroleum Storage Bill. It is noteworthy that although the number of deaths from lamps in the United Kingdom now exceeds three hundred a year, no member of Parliament or philanthropist has written a word or raised his voice against the holocaust, and the Government have been impelled into activity solely by the press above all by the newspaper in the province. If legislation be adopted in England, it will doubtless be imitated abroad, where the scourge of "The Moloch of Kerosine" is also widespread. Meanwhile, so anxious are the public to now have safety lamps, and no others, that every week a number of improvements in the direction of safety are patented by Birmingham firms. When I issued "The Moloch of Paraffin," the number of so-called safety lamps could be counted on one hand. Now there are probably a couple of hundred lamps, claiming to be safe, competing for public favour, and Sir F. Abel and Mr. Redwood will have their work cut out to separate the wheat from the chaff and frame a proper Bill. In the interval, private lamp firms are hastening to turn their concerns into public companies, so as to evade loss if sham safety lamps be suppressed.

MY LECTURES ON PETROLEUM.

LONDON, *February 1st, 1889.*

THE lectures I had been engaged by the Government to deliver before the Royal Engineers at Chatham on the 30th and 31st ultimo narrowly escaped being suppressed by a severe cold on the bronchial tubes, which for several days previous kept me confined to my bed, and rendered me particularly ill-fitted to fulfil my engagements. Fortunately sweatings and poulticings, and other methods of attack-

ing a cold hovering about my right lung, did not materilly interfere with study, above all after the first day or two when the pain was expelled that had pinned me to the bed as though with a bayonet through my chest; and I must confess that I thoroughly enjoyed my confinement to my bed-room. So long as my voice remained good, and I could get down to Chatham, I did not care what occurred afterwards. All the same, when I did arrive there, and found myself dressing for the lecture in the cosy room that had been provided for me at the officers' mess, I felt so seedy that I was more disposed to jump into bed than to go off to the lecture hall. I think I have mentioned before that I do not believe in reading lectures. To deal with a subject *ex tempore*, on the other hand, involves that the lecturer should be in good trim, and this I was not in on this occasion. Under other circumstances I should have simply postponed the lectures; but any postponement of these, after the suppression of the one at Woolwich, would have given rise to inconvenient misconceptions. So I trusted to luck to pull through all right, and although on no previous occasion had a lecture "taken it out of me" so much, it was satisfactorily delivered and the engagement fulfilled. The second day I had recovered so much from the cold that I was able to stand alongside the screen and talk for an hour and-a-half without recourse to any notes or a drink of water, and felt fit at the end for another hour's talking. The second lecture was naturally more interesting than the first. On the first day I had to describe the various parts of the world where oil is found, and trace its history from the time that Noah availed himself of some local petroleum deposits to "pitch the Ark within and without." Then there was the geology to deal with, and the rise of the modern oil industry, first in Scotland, then in the United States, and afterwards in Galicia and the Caspian region. All this required very careful treatment to prevent becoming dull, and it was not until describing the romance of well-boring towards the end, and the marvellous oil-gushers of America and Russia, that the subject became interesting of itself and involved no strain on the lecturer.

The second day provoked more interest, because the distribution of the Russian oil from the Caspian region involved references to the military and political results derived from the development of the Russian petroleum industry, bound to please a military audience. Of course I kept well in view throughout that the lectures were engineering lectures on petroleum; but more than once the political deductions went off of themselves and provoked applause that sorely tempted me to improve the occasion still further. The lecture commenced with showing the oil pipe-line system in America, where there are over seven thousand miles

of pipe lines in use, and the system of despatching it in barrels from the coast refineries to the ports of Europe. It then described the problem Russia had to solve ten years ago in the Caspian Sea, when she had no railway running to Baku and no pipe-lines to convey the oil to refineries on the Black Sea coast. These disadvantages involved sending American barrels right across Europe from the Baltic to the Caspian, where the hot climate caused them to leak and often lose three parts of their contents during the voyage from Baku to the Volga. Driven to improve on this, M. Ludwig Nobel invented the tank steamer, and the new method of transport proved so successful that there are now nearly a hundred running on the Caspian Sea. At first the oil was barrelled at Tzaritzin, the first railway point on the Volga; but M. Noble put on the railway tank-cars, and these also proved so successful that there are now many thousand tank-cars running on the Russian lines. Then great depôts were erected at every Russian centre, some holding twenty or thirty million gallons of oil; and in time the whole of Russia became dotted with these depôts, the collective capacity of which amounts to 120,000,000 gallons of kerosine. Illustrations of the piers at Baku, the Caspian steamers, the Volga oil barges, and the principal Russian oil depôts, were shown in succession; and then appeared a map of Russia, showing every oil depôt, in the railway system of the Empire. When I had explained how the traffic had now reached a high point of organization—dozens of steamers running the oil daily to the Volga and hundreds of trains running it thence to Moscow, St. Petersburg, Helsingfors, Warsaw, Odessa, Orenburg, and in one word to every principal railway centre—I could not help saying:—

"Now I would like you, just for one moment, to forget all about petroleum, and imagine those hundred steamers and those hundreds of trains, instead of running oil from Baku, on the Caspian, to every railway centre of the Russian Empire, suddenly reversing the movement and bringing back—the trains to the Volga, and the steamers to the Caspian—troops and stores for an attack upon India. If you can do this, you will realise, even without including the aid of the six hundred other steamers on the Volga, the enormous forces Russia can pour into the Caspian Sea."

The absolute stillness that prevailed while I was saying this, and the applause that followed, showed I had succeeded in driving home one of the most important of the "political bearings of Baku oil;" and I should have liked to have thrown overboard petroleum altogether, and gone straight for the considerations suppressed at Woolwich. A little while later, another deduction went off of itself. I had a map on the screen showing the three canal systems that connect the River Neva with the River Volga and make St. Petersburg the European outlet of the

Caspian Volga waterway. The map was intended to show how liquid fuel is sent from Baku to Cronstadt for the use of the torpedo boats of the Baltic Fleet. "Through the waterway from the ship-yards of Sweden and England have passed the one hundred oil steamers Russia now possesses in the Caspian Sea. The canal system is constantly being improved. Only recently the Russian Government assigned a quarter of a million sterling for the improvement of the Sheksna route; but even now the sluices can accommodate any vessel under 140 feet in length and 25 in breadth. Steamers longer than this are split amidships on the Neva and rejoined on the Volga—an operation of no particular difficulty. Among the drawings on the table is one of a steamer 217 feet long recently sent by Messrs. Sir Wm. Armstrong Mitchell and Co. from the Tyne to the Caspian Sea. It shows how the steamers are divided amidships. Besides these steamers passing through the canals one way, over one thousand barges of 200 or 300 tons cargo capacity pass through the canals the other way, conveying goods from the Volga to the Neva. Now, gentlemen, I want to ask you this. Remembering that the whole of the one hundred Caspian steamers, with others besides, have passed Cronstadt on their way to the Caspian Sea, do you not think that Russia could also send by the same waterway from Cronstadt torpedo-boats and gunboats to fight you if ever you were to attempt to cut Russia's road of invasion of India *viâ* the Caspian Sea?"

Judging by the burst of applause this evoked, I do not think any officer present would ever support Lord Wolseley's plan of 1885 of marching from Batoum to Baku, and attacking Russia in the Caspain Sea with penny steamers conveyed in segments across Transcaucasia. As well might a nut attempt to crack a steamhammer as England to fight Russia on the waters of the Caspian. Before the applause died away, I was again hard at work at petroleum, describing the proposed crude oil pipeline from Baku to Batoum, the various types of tank steamers that have developed since 1884, and the different methods of burning liquid fuel on steamers and locomotives. At the close were several maps showing the strategical importance of the Baku deposits which lie midway between the railway communications of Europe and India, and will provide fuel for all the railways of the Caspian region. A map showing the projected Russian railways in the Caucasus, Persia, and Khorassan seemed to give very great interest. Another, which also showed how close the recent delimitation had brought the Russian frontier to Herat, illustrated how the Transcaspian railway, nearly 1,000 miles long, and burning only oil fuel, is giving a great impetus to the oil trade of Baku by distributing oil fuel for use in houses, etc.,

in the more or less fuelless region of Turkmenia, Turkistan, and North Afghanistan. The lecture concluded with the question that if Russia, by the development of the Baku oil-fields, had brought about such marvellous changes of a military, political, and commercial character in the Caspian, why should not England try to reap similar results by developing the great Burmese deposits lying in such a convenient position between the Empires of China and India ?"

In proposing a vote of thanks, Colonel Dawson-Scott, the Commandant of the Military School of Engineering, observed that he thought that some of the officers present might find my lectures more useful to them than perhaps they imagined. In India all great undertakings were initiated by the Government, and it might be that ere long some of them might be called upon to undertake the operations I had described.

Let us hope so ; but let us also hope that the operations will be carried out in the proper quarter. If instead of peddling with the pint-pot supply near Sibi, the Indian Government had driven a few bores down to the sea of oil that lies beneath the ancient oil pits of Yenangyoung, a few " gushers " would have not only rewarded the authorities for their pains, but would have probably attracted the attention of English capitalists, whose interest in Indian petroleum has been rather discouraged than otherwise by the poor results of the Beluchistan borings.

No lecturer could have had a kinder and more appreciative audience than I had on both occasions, nor been more kindly treated afterwards at the mess. I think I mentioned the other day that the day before my Woolwich lecture was suppressed, I went for a good walk through Kent, passing Gadshill, and, after dining at the Leather Bottle at Cobham (a favourite inn of Dickens), started off for Maidstone. A heavy rain coming on, however, we changed our course for Rochester, and plodded in the dark along miry roads until we reached that town at the moment when the inhabitants, having finished their tea, were turning out into the streets to do their shopping. Before returning home we wanted a cup of tea, and in discussing where we should get this in Rochester, Strood, or Chatham without going to an hotel, my companion made the remark—" There are plenty of people in the place we should like to know, and there are plenty of people who would like to know us and gladly give us a cup of tea in return for our company. After this tramp we should enjoy their hospitality. We only want the magician to bring us together." This speech recurred to me after my lectures were over, and from my place at the side of the Commandant of Chatham I looked down on the splendid mess-room of the

Engineers, where a couple of hundred officers were chatting gaily over their dinner, while the band played an inspiring selection from *Les Cloches de Corneville.* The rows of officers in their smart scarlet mess jackets, the tables with the handsome silver trophies of the Engineers, the crowd of lacqueys hurrying about with dainty dishes or replenishing the glasses with champagne, the bandmaster gracefully directing the musicians, who from behind screens fronted with palms and evergreens invoked the spirit of gaiety to gladden every heart, despite the grim aspect of many a deceased warrior surveying the banquet from panel and gilt framed canvas—all this would at times melt away, and I could see a couple of wayfarers plodding in the dark along a miry road towards Chatham, and one saying to the other: "There are plenty of people who should like to know, and plenty of people who would like to know us; we only want the magician to bring us together!" Neither of us thought then, as we hunted about, wet and muddy, for a place to get a cup of tea, that the lecture that was in my mind to deliver at Woolwich would never come off, while by suppressing it Lord Salisbury would play the part of magician and bring me back to Chatham to enjoy the hospitality of the Engineers. After all in this life it is the unexpected that always happens. Even civilisation, remorselessly grinding down life to the level of dull routine, cannot wholly deprive it of its romance ; and notwithstanding that the delightful days of Aladin and his wonderful lamp appear to have vanished never to return, such episodes as that of a Prime Minister taking a tramp out of the mire, and placing him at a feast alongside the military king of Chatham, serve to remind one that, even now-a-days in prosaic England, adventures may occur even to a literary man, whose life is popularly supposed to be free from adventure, and passed on a placid pool of ink, which equal some of the stories of enchantment and mystery in the "Arabian Night's."

THE PETROLEUM POLICY OF THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT.

LONDON, *February 28th, 1889.*

THE financial feature of the week has been the mad rush for Ruby Mine shares. The warmest friends of Burma could not have hoped for a better boom, and it is sincerely to be hoped that, now a start has been made, other Burmese ventures will follow. Up to now Burma has been under a cloud. When General Sir Frederick Roberts temporarily pacified the country, he strongly recommended

that it should be permanently tamed by the widespread extention of military roads and railways. The policy was a wise one, and it was one that has never failed. To avoid all references to the Romans, who were adepts in the art of taming by military roads, the historians of Russia admit that the Caucasus was not properly conquered until Prince Worontzoff inaugurated the policy of running roads through the disaffected districts. More recently Merv was completely tamed by the railway; and the Bokharans in turn are being subjected to its soothing influence. Had vigorous railway construction been taken in hand in Burma, several millions might have been spent in a lump; but they would have been usefully spent on lines that would have opened up new markets for British trade, as well as provided occupation for the thousands thrown out of work by the abolition of King Theebaw's rule. In the long run, quite as much money has been wasted in suppressing dacoity; and while Upper Burma possesses only one line instead of several, the disturbed condition of the country has exercised a most damaging influence on its development. The Ruby Mines venture may be the harbinger of better times—let us hope that it will—but to inspire confidence Burma must be better governed than it has been since its annexation, and the sooner the Indian Government adopts Sir Frederick Roberts' recommendation, the more quickly the people will be tranquilised, and British capital attracted to the valley of the Irrawaddy.

The ruby mines yielded King Theebaw £20,000 a year. The Streeter enterprise will double this amount of revenue if all goes well. Forty thousand pounds may seem a large sum to the Indian Government; but the revenue from rubies is a mere *bagatelle* compared with what India might reap from the development of the Burmese oil fields. Six years ago Baku was as much unknown to Europe as Yenangyoung is to-day. It did not yield a sixpence revenue to the Russian Imperial Exchequer. This year, the kerosine tax, derived solely from Baku petroleum, is expected to furnish the sum of 8 million roubles, or £800,000—twenty times the total India will draw from the ruby mines of Burma. Yet, while there has been a vast amount of talk about the Burmese ruby mines, and excited crowds have clamoured for shares in the new venture, investors crushing each other like madmen to get their applications accepted, nothing whatever has been done up to now, either by the Government or by the public, to develop the immense deposits of oil in the Irrawaddy basin. This is nothing more nor less than a scandal, both to India and to England. England pays Russia and the United States two millions sterling a year for kerosine. India pays a million sterling. One would think there were no petroleum fields at all in the British Empire. Yet in

Canada we have the largest oil deposits known—deposits covering an area of over 100,000 square miles in the Mackenzie River region, the deposits of Russia at Baku having an area of only 1,600 square miles—and if the Burmese oil measures were properly developed, we could light all Asia, grease all Asia, and supply with fuel all Asia. The benefit to British trade, as well as to the trade of India, would be enormous. Yet England and India are acting as though fate had left them totally unprovided with oil resources of their own.

To my view it is a scandal—and one to which Indian Congresses might more usefully draw attention than waste their verbosity on imaginary political evils—that the inrush of cheap kerosine from Russia and the United States should be rapidly killing the vegetable oil industry of India without the authorities taking any pains to replace the dying industry by a new one. The petroleum policy of the Indian Government is radically wrong. Instead of imposing a general tax on kerosine, whether home or foreign, it ought to levy a duty on the foreign aritcle and allow Burmese oil to go quite free. Before imposing the recent kerosine tax, it would have acted more wrong had it followed the example of the Russian Government in regard to the *oil industry.* I have before me a batch of most interesting official reports drawn up and printed in Russia last year for the use of the committees appointed to enquire into the crude oil pipe-line scheme (a scheme to lay down an oil conduit from Baku to Botoum, 560 miles), and decide upon the imposition of a kerosine tax. These reports are most exhaustive in describing the growth of the Russian oil trade and the methods of levying oil taxes and duties in every country. They were given me by an obliging official, and, together with the reports of the Petroleum Exhibition, enable one to form a clear opinion as to the results of the policy which I have recommended should be adopted by the Indian Government.

Until 1873 a tax was levied on native Russian oil as well as on the kerosine imported from America. It amounted to about seven pence a gallon, which is a penny more than the duty levied by the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria to protect the Australian shale oil industry. At that time American oil dominated the Russian market, just as it now, with Russain oil, dominates the market of India, and the native lighting industries were all being crushed by the influx of cheap, mineral oil. After a little agitation the Government freed the native petroleum of all imposts, and this gave Baku a chance of competing with Pennsylvania. It should be clearly understood that when this policy was adopted, the Baku oil fields were not even so developed as those of Yenangyoung, and no one had any idea that the petroleum bores there

would yield such a prodigious supply. America herself had not the faintest idea that a rival would spring up in the distant, land-locked Caspian Sea, and would not believe in Baku until forced by bitter competition three years ago. In 1873 Russia imported 13½ million gallons of kerosine. Last year she imported only 50,000 gallons! In the year the tax was abolished, Baku produced only 4 million gallons of kerosine, and only had a couple of wells bored. In 1887 she produced 204 million gallons—a tremendous growth in so short a period. If Burma has dacoits, so also had Baku—the Turkomans on one side of the Caspian and the Daghestan revolters (during the Turkish War of 1876-78) on the other side; and while the River Irrawaddy is in close communication with the sea, Baku is in distance 560 miles from the Euxine—a distance that was only traversed by the locomotive in 1883.

In this manner, thanks to the fiscal policy adopted by the Russian Government, Baku was able to successfully exclude American oil from the home market, and then attack the rival article in the markets of Europe and India. When the trade had become sufficiently busy, the Russian Government felt itself able to re-introduce the excise tax on home-consumed kerosine; and, accordingly, last year a duty of about two pence a gallon was imposed, with a view of making up for the loss of revenue incurred by the collapse of the oil imports. This tax the Minister of Finance calculated would yield a revenue of £800,000 a year. No tax is levied on oil exported from Russia.

If a similar policy to this were adopted in India, English capitalists would be encouraged to take in hand the development of the Burmese oil fields; but there is very little inducement to start refineries at Yenangyoung or elsewhere on the Irrawaddy, while the inflow of the cheap Russian and American article is permitted. Meantime the Indian Government ought to do something to make known the Burmese oil fields. Up to the present moment not a single report of a satisfactory character has been published upon them, and the commercial public at home is hardly aware of their existence. Quite different has been the course adopted by the Canadian Government, which has just sent me a voluminous report on the resources of the Alhabasca and Mackenzie valleys, with maps showing in full the petroleum deposits there. It is only by similar action, and by sinking a few trial bores in Burma, that the Indian Government can hope to stimulate British enterprise. As I demonstrated the other day, heavy oils are rapidly appreciating, and their peculiar suitability for hot climates give Burmese petroleum a special value to which that of America can lay no claim. Situated midway between millions of oil consumers in India and the millions of oil consumers of China, there is a great future for the

Burmese fields if proper steps be taken to develop them. It is a disgrace to British enterprise that, possessing the rich petroleum treasures she does, Burma should have nevertheless imported 1,000,000 gallons of Russian oil from the Caspian Sea last year.

During the last fortnight I have been busy preparing a new pamphlet on this important question, and I trust to see it launched next week. In "The Coming Oil Age" I have done my best to stimulate British capitalists to exploit the mineral oil deposits of Burma, not simply for the sake of India, but for that of England also. Formerly all the oil-tank steamers were built in Sweden; but, thanks to a little pen-pressure, Sir William Armstrong, Melenall and Company, and other firms turned their attention to the industry, and since 1885 upwards of forty-five tank steamers have been built in this country, or are being built now, for the conveyance of petroleum oil. In the matter of pipe-lines, the development of Burma cannot but favourably re-act upon the pipe manufacturing trade of Great Britain. At the Petroleum Exhibition last year, I was interested to learn from oil producers and experts that the reputation of Glasgow stood pre-eminent in this respect, the pipes imported from Germany and America being considered far inferior. The Glasgow firm of Messrs. Andrew and James Stewart, Limited, who supplied the 55 miles of pipe-line for the Suakim-Berber Expedition, also furnished 23 miles of pipes for the Transcaspian Railway. In America there are nearly 6,000 miles of pipe-lines in existence ; while the 53,000 wells bored there have used up thousands of miles of tubing. The development of the Burmese oil fields therefore means a favourable influence on trade at home, and in consequence it is highly probable that if the Indian Government were to give the oil industry a slight start, self-interest would cause many at home to co-operate in pushing the enterprise.

Instead of wasting time and money in purely academic researches in Beluchistan and elsewhere, efforts should be made to tap the oil where the oil is known to exist the most copiously. In America the first wells were sunk where oil pools had been skimmed by the Indians for countless generations. In Russia the bores were made where from time immemorial the Persians had been known to extract oil from pits. Similarly, the Indian Government would have done better to have pierced the rock at Yenangyoung, where oil has been extracted for thousands of years, instead of experimenting in the wastes of Beluchistan. From the Irrawaddy oil could be easily conveyed in tank steamers to Kurrachee for fuel purposes on the Indus lines. Quite recently the Americans have laid down a pipe-line, 210 miles long, simly to "pipe" fuel oil to Chicago, where it is replacing coal in the factories. Thanks to the development

of the bulk system of transport, oil can be handled with remarkable facility. The Armstrongs have just completed three steamers each of over 4,000 tons (more than 1,100,000 gallons apiece) cargo capacity, which can be loaded or emptied in twelve hours. With pipelines laid down and a few steamers at work, it would therefore be easy for Burma to meet to the fullest the fuel requirements of the Indus lines ; and this alone, I imagine, would justify the Indian Government in taking early steps to develop and organize the petroleum industry in the Irrawaddy basin.



DR. NOETLING'S "WILD IDEAS" ABOUT BURMESE PETROLEUM.



LONDON, *July 18th, 1889.*

THE report on the Burmese oil-fields by Dr. Fritz Noetling, "Palæontologist, Geological Survey of India," published in the *Burma Gazette*, dated June 15th, has reached me this week, and in the absence of any special political news, it may as well furnish a subject for the present letter. Dr. Noetling has paid a visit to the Yenangyoung petroleum fields, and provides a number of facts, apparently collected with much method and care, which he puts forward in rather a dreary form, accompanied by the opinion that "wild ideas about beating or competing with American or Russian oil cannot be too strongly deprecated as being only too likely to prove utterly illusory." It is into this opinion that I wish to plant my claws, because I am personally responsible for the origination and diffusion of these "wild ideas," and am naturally put on my defence by such a dogmatic assertion. Of Dr. Noetling as an individual I know nothing. I do not know whether he has studied pertroleum or not—a knowledge of palæontology does not necessarily involve the slightest acquaintance with oil in its geological or commercial state—but I deal with his opinions put as they are in the report, together with the facts from which they are derived. He has put forward his facts, and from them he has reasoned his deductions. I will deal with both as they stand.

In general, Dr. Noetling speaks well of Burmese petroleum. "On the whole," he says in the sentence preceding what a Yankee would term the "wild cat" one, "there is every reason to believe that the oil industry will develop in the future, and will rank amongst the important mineral industries of Burma." This opinion, as well as the one censuring "wild ideas," is deduced

from a personal examination of the oil-pits of Yenangyoung. Dr. Noetling I am afraid, is somewhat a pedant, for he cannot let the established title of Yenangyoung alone. He must call his report "A report on the oil-fields of Twingaung and Beme" and starts by setting the whole world right by stating that "these oil fields, generally but wrongly called the oil-fields of Yenangyoung, are situated at a distance of 1½ miles to the east of that place, near the villages of Twingaung and Beme." The world sits corrected. When people talk about the Russian oil-fields, they always associate them with Baku. Everybody speaks of Baku as the Petrolia of Russia, yet, as a matter-of-fact, the oil-fields are situated 6 or 8 miles from that town, at Balakhani and Saboontchi. The world, however, prefers to be a little bit wrong to being everlastingly tied, strapped, muzzled, and gagged with pedantry; and so I imagine that although it will be wrong to refer in the future to the Petrolia of Burma as being situate in Yenangyoung, the world will persist in perferring the old appellation to Dr. Noetling's new-fangled and unnecessary correction.

Dr. Noetling paid a visit to all the percolating pits, and measured, guaged, and surveyed them in the most approved manner. To his industry in collecting the facts, and ticketting and tabulating them, I wish to assign the fullest credit. So far as this part is concerned, Dr. Noetling seems to have done his work well. Now for his opinions and their value. In the first place, Dr. Noetling, while at the utmost pains to forecast all that can be forecasted about the existing native pits, expressly states that he can forecast nothing about what lies below them. His geology and his palæontology are of not the slightest value in enabling us to pierce below the bottom of the present pits. He can, in a word, only predict what we already know. Any measuring clerk, ignorant of palæontology, would be able to furnish the same calculations as the learned doctor if he went over the wells as he did, and roughed out an estimate of the present production. If, however, Dr. Noetling has to admit —as any other geologist would have to admit—that he does not know what the yield will be when the present 200 feet native pits are sunk 2,000 feet by the aid of the drill, how can he possibly assert that my idea or anybody else's, is a wild one that Burma may some day beat or compete with American or Russian oil." Dr. Noetling is not competent to express such an opinion, simply because he has got no facts to base such an opinion upon.

Equally with Dr. Noetling I admit I know nothing about what lies below the present Burmese pits. But what I do know is this—and apparently he is ignorant of this primary petroleum fact—that before the drill was sunk in America, and before the drill was sunk at Baku, the native pits there were no more copious

in their percolations than those of Burma, if as much. If therefore, in America and Russia experience showed that when the drill was shoved through the old historical Indian and Persian pits a vast supply was at once forthcoming, is not the inference fair that we may hope to see a similar result in Burma, were the pits are older, if anything, and the percolations certainly greater than in America? Why should such an inference, which would be admitted in a court of law as fairly deduced from adequate evidence, be branded as a "wild idea" by one who is unable to impugn it with a single title of contrary evidence?

Take the case of America. It was not a mere geological survey that revealed the hidden oil treasures. It was the drill that did the business. Even now, after 60,000 wells have been sunk, the most skilful petroleum geologist cannot point out the spot where oil can assuredly be found and where oil assuredly cannot. As a matter-of-fact, no American geologist would have penned such a rash and unsupported assertion as Dr. Noetling's, because he would have been too keenly concious of the present importance of geological science to venture into such dogmatism. I am not declaiming against geologists in general. I am too warm an admirer of science to encourage any disrespect towards it: but while there are Darwins and Huxleys and Tyndalls whose carefully weighed opinions command universal esteem, there are scientists of the order immortalised in *Pickwick* whose judgments cannot be allowed to pass unquestioned. When formulating a deduction from the petroleum experience obtained in America, Russia, and Galicia, I expressed the opinion that we might expect a vast supply from the Burmese oil-fields when the primitive pits were replaced by engineering methods, I at least argued from the known, whereas when Dr. Noetling declares this to be a "wild idea" he argues from the unknown, because he provides no data beyond his yard measuring and pintpot guagings of the native pits—data of not the slightest value in enabling us to judge what lies 1,000 feet below those existing primitive pit bottoms.

Gazing at the Indian pits and pools on the surface of America 30 years ago, before Colonel Drake sunk his first artesian well, who would have thought that the production, then only a thousand gallons or so a year, would mount up to a thousand million gallons of "crude" in the present year of grace! Nobody knew what there was in the Pennsylvanian sands till the drill went down and up shot the oil. The same was the case at Baku. When the first well was drilled there, the conditions were identical with those in Burma—the surface was spotted with percolating pits, and nobody knew what was below them. Even Abich, the greatest of European geologists, who visited them and

examined them with even more care than Dr. Noetling, had not the faintest idea that below the pits the ground was so heavily charged with oil. A few drills were sunk, and then the treasure of oil was revealed—a single well spouted more than all the 27,000 wells of America put together. Speaking one day to Ludwig Nobel, the Baku oil king, who drilled more wells in the Caspian region than any other petroleum proprietor, I asked him of what aid was geology in boring his wells. Ludwig Nobel was of a family of savants, and would have been the last man in the world to depreciate science. "Practically none at all," was the reply. "It is all guess work. No geologist can point to a spot and say—there you will find oil and there you won't. The drill is the only test." More recently I put the same question to a man who has bored many wells in Galicia, where the geological conditions are totally different. His reply was: "I employ a geologist because, with our up and down strata, two heads are sometimes better than one; but it is sheer guess work. The driller of the best and most copious well in Galicia told me he selected the spot for the well by chucking his cap into the air and starting the drill where it fell." Over and over again at Baku the predictions, pessimist and otherwise, of prancing young geologists have been falsified by events. More than one declared that it was no use boring at Biby Ibat, a spot on Baku bay a dozen miles from where all big wells were located. Tagieff took no notice and kept boring away, and one morning up shot oil at the rate of 11,000 tons a day, and the oil spray fell over an area of three miles—into the very streets of Baku. Every oil fountain at Baku has been going to be the last on a large scale ; but almost every season another still bigger has beat the record. Dr. Noetling is quite right in admitting that he does not know what the ground below 310 feet will bring forth when the drill goes down to 600 or 800 feet, as at Baku, or, 1,000 to 3,000, as in America. He is quite wrong in asserting afterwards that "wild ideas about beating American cannot be too strongly deprecated as being too likely"—why too likely ? he advances no evidence to support this—"to prove utterly (?) illusory." If a man were to rush into a "pub," and, seizing the first pint-pot on the counter, were to proceed to deduce from its contents the quantity of liquor in the cellar, we should smile at his Quixotic rashness. Yet this is precisely what Dr. Fritz Noetling, Palæontologist, has done in the case of Burma.

I personally deprecate rash assertions. I pass my life among publishers, politicians, and company promoters, and it amuses me to watch how they multiply two by two and make it five to their advantage. At the same time I also mix with hard-headed business men and trained scientific thinkers, who are accustomed to look at

plain facts plainly, and allow no exaggeration to pass unchallenged. In petroleum matters I am constantly consulted by firms and companies, to lead whom astray by assertions of a purely speculative character would involve a heavy pecuniary loss. When on the correctness of an opinion may be staked thousands of pounds, one is compelled to carefully weigh one's statements and balance probabilities to a nicety. Such a training may not enable one to write Palæontologist after his name; but it may qualify one none the less to express a sound opinion on what is after all not a purely palæontological or geological question, but a question of a commercial character Dr. Noetling's opinion, so far as they concern the character of the present supply of the percolating native pits, are worthy of every consideration. I see no occasion to criticise that part of his report. When, however, he goes beyond the legal limits of his data, and from defining the future of the pint-pot wells at Yenangyoung, proceeds dogmatically to predict the future, not only of the unknown hogsheads of oil underneath the 310-feet pits, but also of the whole petroleum supply of Burma, then I am compelled to ask him to come down of his palæontological perch as being incompetent to express an opinoin upon a point on which he has no information to guide him. I may be wrong, as a petroleum expert in predicting a great future for Burmese petroleum; but I at least base my opinion on the facts of the growth of the industry in America, Russia, and Galicia; whereas Dr. Noetling, as a palæontologist, in pooh-poohing my prediction, bases his opinion on nothing at all, because his geological knowledge goes no deeper than the deepest of the presentp its; and apparently he has no general knowledge of the petroleum industry to guide him. I infer this from a number of speculative assertions he makes, which would not have been present in his report had he possessd a knowledge of the varied conditions characteristic of the oil production in different countries.

Seeing that the Russian Government expects to draw one million sterling in revenue this year from Baku kerosine, the question of developing the Burmese oil-fields is too important to be permitted for one moment to lie prone under a palæontological wet blanket. Dr. Noetling says that the idea of "Burma ever competing with," let alone "beating," Russia and America is "wild" and "illusory." Why is it? He knows how much oil is in the pits of Yenangyoung; but he knows and admits he knows nothing about the amount of oil existing outside them, lower down, and elsewhere; hence he proves himself guilty of wild assertion. Dr. Noetling is not the first false prophet of his kind. When I first began to write about Russian oil ten years ago, the oil trade of England, as well as of American, laughed outright at my conjecture that before long Russia would compete and perhaps beat America in the European

market. Baku at that time was as unknown to Europe as Yenang-young, and produced scarcely more oil. Year after year the Dr. Noetlings of America pooh-poohed my forecast; but Baku, in spite of the wet-blanketting, forged a head until Russian oil undersold American oil in every European market, and completely drove it out of many parts of the Continent. My "wild ideas" that Russia would successfully compete with America proved correct in this case.

When six years ago I declared, from observations made in the Caspian, that tank steamers could safely run in the Mediterranean and Atlantic, and predicted that they would do so in a few years, I had to run the gauntlet of the Dr. Noetlings of the petroleum and shipping trades in this country and America, who attacked me as a wild enthusiast asserted that the conveyance of oil in barrels would never be superseded. To-day there are not only 100 tank steamers running on the Caspian but 50 as well—some of 4,000 tons capacity—on the Mediterranean and Atlantic; and when I survey this oil fleet of 50 European tank steamers—a fleet that was never, never to have come into existence—I feel a sort of second Peter the Great who from Peterhoff used to watch with pride the fleet he had created lying at anchor at Cronstadt. Peter commanded all the material resources of the whole Russian Empire in establishing his fleet. My fleet of 50 petroleum steamers, which has sprung into existence in five short years, is the product of a steel pen and a few drops of ink. Many a hot controversy had to be fought before I was able to bring the petroleum trade to my way of thinking; but the revolution from barrel to tank steamer was accomplished at last, and now nobody questions those "wild ideas of tank steamers running on the Atlantic" at which the palæontological pessimists of the oil trade croaked a few years ago.

In the establishment of liquid fuel, again, I had many a tough encounter. My prognostication that in a few years steam-boat fleets and railways, wherever oil was cheap, would use nothing else was met with cries of "wile ideas;" and even the Admiralty, only three years ago, appointed a commission to report whether oil *could*, be used as fuel, which was about as sensible as the Chinese experimenting in 1887 as to whether locomotives could run or not on metals, seeing that for years hundreds of steamers and locomotives had been successfully runinng with liquid fuel in Russia. To-day over 1,000 locomotives and steamers burn oil exclusively; and in America, were liquid fuel hardly used at all when I began to write about it, there are hundreds of factories using nothing else, and hundreds of miles of pipe-lines are now being put down to supply the large towns with oil for fuel.

With lamps, again, when I insisted in 1886 that all lamps should be made absolutely safe, and invoked the aid of legislation,

the Dr. Noetlings of Birmingham scouted my ideas as "wild and illusory," and put the whole blame on a careless and stupid public. However, they had to fight the matter out, and when I had educated the press into a chorus of denunciation, the loss of trade they incurred compelled them to resort to improvements. Over two hundred applications for safety lamp patents have been made since I inaugurated the crusade. My judgment that the Defries lamp was the only real safety lamp in use was ratified by the Russian press at the International Petroleum Exhibition at St. Petersburg last year, who awarded the only medal for safety lamps to that firm, and this ratification caused many firms to spend thousands in putting down plant to manufacture lamps attaining the standard of safety I had laid down in "Moloch of Paraffin." Finally the Government itself appointed commission to enquire into the dangerous lamps I had denounced, and the anti-Moloch legislation, declared to be "wild and illusory" when I proposed it three years ago, now appears to be within measurable distance of actual realisation.

So that having been correct in my deductions so many times, I have a fair claim, I imagine, to a respectful hearing when I deduce, from conditions characterising the growth of the oil trade in America and Russia, that Burma in all probability will be able to compete with and beat them in the Eastern market as soon as deep borings replace the present primitive pits. If both in America and Russia the oil trade was inferior to that of Burma until deep borings were made, why should Burma be utterly incapable of equalling them when she, in turn, takes to boring also for oil? There is absolutely not the slightest scientific ground for Dr. Noetling's pessimist assertion that "wild ideas about beating or competing with American or Russian oil cannot be too strongly deprecated as being only too likely to prove utterly illusory." If I have taken him to task somewhat strongly for putting forward such a statement, it is because I feel the Government of India and its officials, palæontological or otherwise, ought to do their utmost to promote the development of the Burmese oil-fields and not discourage enterprise by such ill-timed and baseless pessimism as that which I have been compelled to criticise in the present report. For Burma generally there is a fair hope that she may in a few years take her place side by side with America and Russia in supplying the world with oil. Whatever I can do with my pen to secure her that position will be done ungrudgingly, not out of any spurt of wild enthusiasm, but because, as an English petroleum writer, I am determined to secure for England her proper place among the petroleum-producing empires of the universe. I have done much to make Baku: I mean to do my best to make Burma.

HAS BAKU "BUSTED."

LONDON, *August 22nd, 1889.*

A FEW weeks ago I had to very severely take to task Dr. Fritz Noetling, Palæontologist to the Geological Survey of India, for having dared, after a cursory investigation, with a yard measure and a pint pot, of the oil-fields of Yenangyoung, to step outside the limits of his very narrow examination, and on no evidence whatever, whether geological, palæontological, or any other-kind-of-ogical, attempt to lay down the law for the whole future of the entire petroleum industry of Burma by warning the public against "wild ideas about Burma beating or competing with American or Russian oil as being only too likely to prove utterly illusory." I demonstrated that, as that Doctor of Ancient Fossils confessed he knew nothing of what existed beneath the 300-feet wells of Yenangyoung, or in the unworked districts at the side of them, he had no right, geological, governmental, or German, to express such an uncalled-for opinion in an official report, and I could not but declare my regret that the Government of India should have sent to report upon the most important of the Burmese oil-fields a man who, however competent to fix the area of the country with his yard measure and guage the contents of the wells with his pint pot, was, from his utter ignorance of petroleum, quite incompetent to act as Sir Oracle in the question of the future of the petroleum industry of Burma. Honest difference of opinion I am always ready to treat with respect; but I cannot tolerate the dogmatism of arrogant ignorance. Such reports as Dr. Noetling's excite my wrath, because they give me so much work to do to correct the errors they propagate, and I am not sufficiently fond of petroleum to enjoy unprofitable labour of this sort. Curiously, at the very moment extracts from Dr. Noetling's pessimist report are appearing in the English press, the Foreign Office has circulated a consular report by Acting Consul Stevens, of Batoum, declaring that "the wells of Buku are failing, and that unless new sources of oil are discovered a cessation of the supply of petroleum may be expected within a short time." This has led to the widely-spread impression that Baku has "busted." Having "busted," your readers will naturally exclaim, "Now's a chance for Burma. Surely Yenangyoung can beat or compete with a busted Baku."

Very glad I should be if I could confirm the Consul's statement that Baku is on the eve of a smash-up. Personally I have no interest whatever, direct or indirect, in the Russian petroleum

industry, and for political reasons would welcome the collapse of an industry, the failure of which would do as much to wreck Russian power in the Caspian Sea as a universal military collapse in Central Asia and on the Perso-Afghan confines. In a tame sort of way, the Consul points out that "the cessation of the supply would cause a stoppage of all operations, both on the Caspian at Batoum, and very probably the ruin of those concerned in the trade, besides putting a very large number of working classes out of employ. Rumours are current that the Russian Government is on the point of imposing a duty on petroleum exported abroad, which has thus far been free from taxation. This will doubtless be done to diminish exportation. Meanwhile the price of crude oil at Baku has gone up 100 per cent." In other and more vigorous words, the failure of the Baku oil supply would wreck 20 millions of capital invested in refineries, stops a production of 250 million gallons of kerosine a year, deprive 1,000 steamers, locomotives, and factory engines of their fuel, throw 120 steamers and 10,000 tank-trucks out of employment, and sweep away a revenue of a million sterling a year levied on Baku oil. Really a most prodigious catastrophe to be feared ! "Meanwhile the price of crude oil has gone up 100 per cent"—awful ! awful ! Get out flaming posters, Mr. Editor, and send about the news boys shouting at the top of their hoarse and hideous voices, "Bust up of the oil trade of Baku ; orsible slorter !"

In Russia they have a custom of frequently publishing the reports of Ministers, Governors-General, and other high and mighty personages in the *Official Gazette*, with some such observation as this appended thereto :—"His Imperial Majesty, on perusing this, was graciously pleased to write across the top "Good ;" or "I approve ;" "Most excellent and satisfactory ;" or some other court expression of Autocratic opinion. The plan is not a bad one, and might be advantageously followed elsewhere. Had the report of Acting Consul Stevens, for instance, been submitted to me as a potentate of petroleum by the Foreign Office for approval previous to being officially published, I should have been able to save myself a deal of subsequent trouble in explaining matters by writing across it—"Bosh : Charles Marvin.".

Is there anything more intolerable in life than to have to keep on explaining away the errors of dogmatic ignorance ? Hardly had Dr. Noetling set on foot by his wild and reckless assertion the query, "Is it true, Mr. Marvin, that Burma cannot possibly hope to compete with Russia and America ?" when the foolishness of this Absalom of a Batoum Consul causes the question to arise on every side, "Please explain, Mr. Marvin, is it really correct that Baku is on the point of busting ?"

The question is not a new one. That "Baku is going to bust" has been predicted times out of number ever since I began to write about it ten years ago. It crops up every season like the sea serpent or gaint gooseberry; and then those who hate Baku, and are angry because I have written it up, dance round me, tomahawk in hand, like a howling mob of interrogative demons. On this occasion they are more triumphant than ever, for has not an Acting Consul spoken, and whose wisdom on earth, if unofficial and unconsular, can surpass the wisdom of one able to write those awe-inspiring words after his name "Her Britannic Majesty's Consul"—a title suggestive of all the wisdom of Greece and Rome; of Confucius, Socrates, and Solomon; and of the mental might and majesty of the British Constitution, concentrated within the cranium of one man, and striking dumb with a crushing feeling of conscious insignificance all other men unable to display that golden talisman —"H. B. M. Consul."

My grandmether, who recently died at the advanced age of 91, suffered for several years before her death from a very worying malady. Conscious and contented enough during the day, the moment darkness set in she began to fidget and put the question, "Where am I to sleep to-night?" A reply would be given, and for a while she would be happy; but, ten minutes later, the impression would vanish, and she would again anxiously enquire, "Am I to sleep here to-night or where?" Put in some similar form fifty times in the course of the evening, and continued 365 evenings in the course of the year, this question was apt to be somewhat a strain upon the patience of those about her. Equally provocative of irritability has been the perennial enquiry, addressed to me by the grandmothers of British commerce ever since I began to write about Baku—"Is it true that Baku is about to bust? We hear of a crisis there."

There always has been a crisis at Baku. I have quite a library of Russian literature dealing with the rise of the Baku industry—it is the record of perennial crisis. Sometimes there is too much "crude," and the well-owners cannot sell their oil—crisis. Sometimes there is not enough "crude," and the refiners bawl for more oil—crisis. Then both have a good time and are about to rejoice, when they discover there are not enough tank steamers to take the oil to market—crisis. Then, too many tank-steamers are put on and they cannot find freight—crisis. I might go on to the end of the article with similar causes of depression at Baku, all of them ephemeral; but I have given sufficient illustrations to show that a crisis at Baku does not necessarily imply death any more than the toothache or any other trifling ailment forebodes dissolution to the human being suffering from the minor ills that accompany

us through life. These crises, in short, are simply the growing pains of the industry. Nobody who knows the whole history of the rise of the oil industry in America or Russia bothers about these crises, because he sees that, year after year, the industry keeps on growing and expanding; but they are a great nuisance in one respect. Tourists, ignorant of petroleum, or petroleum merchants ignorant of Russ, or Consuls too lazy to study the Russian literature dealing with the industry, happen to pass through Baku while a crisis is on, and, mistaking the growing pain for a death agony, publish preposterous statements like that of Mr. Stevens I am now castigating.

Nobody worries about the American oil-supply drying.

Yet, of the two, there is far greater reason for believing that the oil-wells of the states will become exhausted first. In 1886 I had to pulverize a similar report, and the words I wrote in my "Coming Deluge of Russian Petroleum" will be seen to cover the present case so fully that had Consul Stevens been at pains to make himself acquainted with the literature of the industry, he would not have rendered the Consular Department of the Foreign Office the laughing stock of Russia. In this pamphlet I said:—'Persons interested in the American trade sometimes say, "The yield at Baku is, of course, prodigious, and altogether transcends the petroleum supply of the United States, but it won't last long. They have to bore deeper and deeper for oil every year.' But this assertion, however befoolingly put, cannot bear a moment's scientific scrutiny. We have ample historical evidence that for 2,500 years petroleum has been flowing from the Apsheron Peninsula; and it is difficult to believe that 500 prickings in an acre of five square miles should cause the entire oil area of 1,600 square miles to dry up in a year or two. But 'they have to bore deeper and deeper every year.' So they have to do in America, so they have to do everywhere. But there is this all-important difference between Baku and America: the deeper Baku bores the greater the gush of oil, which is not the rule with her Transatlantic rival. Then look at the margin in favour of Baku. In America it is common to bore 2,000 feet for oil, and some wells attain a depth of 3,000. At Baku a well 700 or 800 feet is considered a deep one, and last year the average depth of all the wells was only 462 feet! Of the two, it is rather America that is drying up, not Baku."

I am thinking of having printed a stereotyped slip to hand to people or newspapers who plague me with the question, "Is Baku going to dry up?" It will be worded thus:—'Area of oil saturated region at Baku, 1,600 square miles; area exploited, 5 square miles; balance 1,595 square miles; depth of wells, 600 to 700 feet; depth

of American wells, 1,500 to 2,500 feet; balance in favour of Baku, 900 to 1,800 feet; number of wells bored up to now, 500; in America, 55,000; balance in favour of Baku, 54,500 wells. If you are not satisfied, kindly go and bore Baku, don't bore me."

It is perfectly true that there has been a short supply of crude at Baku; but this occurs every season. In America, where the industry is thoroughly organized, almost every drop of oil that comes to the surface is properly stored. In Russia, where the copiousness of the supply has caused the wellowners to be careless of storage, there is a wilful waste of millions of gallons one week, followed by woeful want the next. But a short supply on the surface is one thing and total failure of the supply below the surface another. Out of ignorance, sheer ignorance, as Dr. Johnson would have said, Consul Stevens has confused the two. Even the advance of 100 per cent, is a mountain made out of a molehill. Fluctuations of 100, 200, 300 and 400 per cent. are common every season. But what of that? Let us strip the fact of Consular glamour. The present price of kerosine wholesale in England is sixpence per gallon. An advance of 100 per cent. would make it a shilling, which would be a serious advance for the consumer. But if, on the other hand, an advance of 100 per cent. on crude oil at Baku simply means an advance in price from a quarter of a farthing a gallon to half farthing a gallon, or from half a farthing a gallon to a whole farthing a gallon, or from a farthing a gallon to a half-penny a gallon, it means nothing wonderful at all, being merely an advance from no price at all to a nominal price, from dirt cheap to dirt cheap plus a fraction.

The dearest price the refiners at Baku (I get the Tiflis and Baku papers every day and know what is going on) have been paying for oil this season would be considered Munchausenly cheap in America. The surface supply is short because there are only 200 wells at work, and of late there have been few new borings and only a few deepenings of the present wells. This is due to a reaction against previous activity, when the wells produced a lot of oil for which no market was available, causing the well-owners to slacken their production in disgust. A single fountain would set everything straight, or a little more energetic pumping of the stagnant wells. Every year there are plenty of such fountains: there were 30 or 40 last year and 33 the year before. I received the mining report of the Caucasus for 1887 from Tiflis this week. The statistical facts of the oil trade are very interesting; but my letter is already too long, and like Baku, I must begin to "dry up." Suffice it to say that from a single well, No. 5, there spouted in 1887 over 52,000,000 gallons of oil. Of this quantity only 17 million gallons was saved; the

rest was allowed to run to waste. The total waste from all the fountains was 53 million gallons—enough to freight fifty-three 4,000-ton tank-steamers. Brought to England and sold at a penny a gallon, the wasted oil would have fetched nearly a quarter of a million sterling, and at two pence a gallon—a price hundreds of firms would gladly give for it for fuel and gas—nearly half a million sterling. Last year the waste was nearly as great, and this season most of the fountain-oil has been lost. And this is what a Consul, scampering casually to the Caspian during a crisis caused by the want of the oil wasted a few weeks earlier, calls "a failing of the oil-wells of Baku."

No, there is no more fear of Baku "busting" during the next half century than there is of my dying before I write my next letter. A few sips of a tankard do not empty a hogshead: nor yet a few hundred pricks in a five-mile plateau drain in a year or two 1,600 miles of oil saturated territory. On a memorable occasion Dr. Johnson, addressing a doubter, exclaimed:—I can give you a reason: I cannot give you an understanding." The arguments I have cited why Baku cannot possibly "bust" have been given over and over again in my works Presumably, Consul Stevens has not read them; nor yet any of the recent Russian official reports and non-official literature dealing with Baku, or he could never have sent in such balderdash to the Foreign Office. If, after these remarks, doubt lingers in his mind, or any one else's, all I can do is to shrug my shoulders and apply to the doubter the above-mentioned Johnsonian quotation.

BRAINS FROM BAKU.

LONDON, *October 3rd, 1889.*

GOSPODIN GULISHAMBAROFF, chief petroleum adviser to the Russian Government, has been stopping with me at Plumstead during the past week. Having picked up whatever information he could gather about the progress of petroleum during a circular tour through Europe, he has touched at London to ascertain the condition of the English oil trade. I think I have before stated that years ago, when the Russian Government decided to encourage the petroleum industry at Baku, then in a still more backward condition than that of Yenangyoung, it picked out Gospodin Gulishambaroff, whose writings on petroleum had attracted some attention, and set him to work to make known Baku to Russia and the world. After a while, he was sent to America to

report upon the oil industry there, and on his way collected a deal of information in the petroleum districts of Galicia, Germany, and other countries. The views he expressed on his return were of a decidedly encouraging character, and Ludwig Nobel, the Baku oil king, himself told me once that his exertions had been largely stimulated by the works of the talented Armenian writer. To put the matter picturesquely, a hot Armenian set on fire a cold Swede and caused Ludwig Nobel to turn from the making of gun-barrels to the refining and transport of oil. Gulishambaroff's advice was also beneficially accepted in other quarters. The Russians had plenty of oil refuse in the Caspian, but no good systems of their own for burning it; England and America had invented plenty of good liquid fuel furnaces but had no oil to burn in them. Gulishambaroff's work on liquid fuel made known to Baku the inventions of the world for burning oil, and Baku adopting them, solved the oil fuel problem so thoroughly that she now feeds with fuel nearly 1,000 steamers, locomotives and factory furnaces in Russia. Later on, Gulishambaroff showed how to elaborate bulk transport, how to prepare the proper oil for the different markets of Europe, how to develope the trade viâ Batoum, and how to compete with America in the Far East. No living writer has written so much on petroleum as Gulishambaroff; no living writer has written so much so will Besides quite a library of works, he has published numerous maps and two admirable bibliographies of the books published in Russia and aboard, dealing with, or referring to, petroleum. When the Russian Government took up Gulishambaroff and assigned a certain annual salary to secure his brains, it made a good investment. On a famous occasion, when Sir Joshua Reynolds was pressed by an importunate questioner to state what he mixed his colours with, he replied: "Brains!' Similarly, if asked to explain what has caused such an extraordinary development of the Russian petroleum industry during the last few years, I should answer: "Brains, my dear sir, brains!" The hearty encouragement of Prince Dondukoff Korsakoff, the intellectual guidance of Gulishambaroff, the energy and ingenuity of Ludwig Nobel, the science of Mendelaieff—these are among the chief factors that have made Baku the Queen City of the Caspian Sea. Capital has, in addition, been forthcoming, but it was brains that pioneered European cash to Baku, brains that invested it soundly there, and brains that built up a trade in oil in ten short years so colossal as to cause an Indian Professor of ancient fossils to recently gasp that poor little pigmy Burma could never, never, never, hope to beat it.

Dr. Noetling's report, which Gospodin Gulishambaroff came across in going through my store of petroleum information, amused the Russian expert greatly. Of the two, Russia would naturally

see Burman undeveloped that developed; but Gulishambaroff knows that there is ample room for all three countries, America, Russia and Burma, to supply the increasing wants of the world, and shares my own view that whatever may be the policy of any Government, there ought to be no encouragement given to the diffusion of erroneous facts and gaseous fancies. On reading Dr. Noetling's warning that "wild ideas about Burma competing with Russia and America ought to be deprecated as only too likely to prove utterly illusory," he observed: "Dr. Noetling's geological arrogance is on a par with that of the savant Abich, who, on visiting Baku and examining the native pits as Noetling has done, declared that oil would be found in three strata down to a certain depth, and that no oil would be found if they bored deeper. When the drill did bore deeper, we found more oil instead of less, and there are no indications whatever of the deep supply giving out. When you write to India, mention this fact about Abich, the great geologist, and Baku." As a matter-of-fact how can a man know what exists at 1,500 feet, if he has only been able to examine as low as 300? It is not geology, but guess-work to put forward such rash statements, which have no foundation in fact.

When the Russian Government decided to push petroleum. it went in for brains enriched with a wide knowledge of the subject. When the Indian Government started on the same path the other day, it selected an expert in old fossils, whose chief merit seems to have been that he knew palæontology, but not petroleum. Baku has thriven on brains: whether Burma will flourish on the palæntological effluvia of old fossils remains to be seen. I observe in the Indian press that Dr. Noetling is preparing a second report, which is to contain an answer to my little pen pricks. He would be far better employed in studying petroleum before resuming his palæontological prancings. Already, in your contemporary, he has admitted that the deposits of Burma really are "immense," and thereby knocked his own first report into a cocked hat as neatly as the most inveterate controversialist could desire. This point admitted, the opinion of Dr. Noetling on the commercial or financial aspect is of no particular interest and does not trouble the commercial world at all. A Rangoon paper mentions, I note that a well has alreayb been sunk at Yenangyoung on the American principle, 800 feet, without tapping oil in vast quantities. Messrs. Finlay, Fleming wish it to be assumed therefore, I imagine, that a large supply does not exist. No doubt they would prefer to retain a monopoly by the diffusion of this impression. But if it be remembered that 1,500 feet is the common depth in America, the Yenangyoung field has not been properly tested as to *depth* yet, while, if I point out that one well in 3 or 4

in America is a dry well, and that dry and flowing wells are mixed together in the oil fields, it will be seen that there must be many more bores of 800 feet over the area before we can form an opinion as to the amount of oil in the general expanse of Yenangyoung. The little twitter about Burma's one well, drilled in the American fashion, is silenced when we see America drilling in a single year as many as 4,000 wells. In 1887 she lowered the record by drilling only 1,286 wells, of which 456 were dry, and in 1888 about 1,200, of which 885 were dry. It does not necessarily follow that because little oil may exist at 800 feet it may not exist in enormous quantities at 900. For instance, the Biby Ibat oil field at Baku was regarded as of no account a few years ago. Tagieff bored 700 feet without any satisfactory results. His well was regarded as a dry one, and a neighbouring one, belonging to Jakelli, which had got down to 567 feet, was abandoned. Tagieff went on. At 714 feet he struck the great 11,000-ton-a-day-gusher, the largest outburst of oil ever known. Then Jakelli started again, and when he had got down to 672 feet the well spouted stones, sand and oil to a height of 350 feet following with a flow of oil almost as copious as that of Tagieff's. To speak, therefore, of one pitiful prick in Burma as having put Mr. Marvin wrong is to betray an ignorance in petroleum which is lamentable in those who pretend to speak with authority. Criticism of this sort is just what Gulishambaroff had encounter when he began encouraging the development of Baku. When he commenced to write, Baku had a population of a little over 11,000 people: it has now a population of 70,000. Will Yenangyoung be as big as Baku when death takes this pen from these fingers?

On Saturday we paid a visit to Westminster Abbey, as we stood in frontof the tomb of Jonas Hanway, the great British merchant of old, whose account of the Caspain Sea contains an admirable description of Buku, I could not help reflecting on the enormous changes that have occurred since Hanway and other English merchants tried to develop the Caspian trade and conduct regular commerce between England and India by way of St. Petersburg, the Volga, Baku and Herat. Hanway probably little thought when he explored and described Baku—where his memory is still revered—that Baku would some day pay his tomb a visit in Westminster Abbey. I have not the least doubt that some day erudite young Baboos from Yenangyoung, will pay a pilgrimage to my last resting-place and extol me for what I have done on behalf of Burmese petroleum. Their reverential tears I shall be obliged for if the grass is as dry as it sometimes is round the tumult of the London suburban cemeteries, but I do hope they won't drop into poetry. Some of my young Baboo friends in

India have lately sent me their effusions, and while I admire their loyalty and appreciate their kindly recognition, I cannot candidly say that their poetical bugle-blasts bring undiluted pleasure to my sensitive ear. If they wish to chant their "wood notes wild" to my delectation, let them put Dr. Noetling into poetry, say in an "Ode on Petrole—um."

Gospodin Gulishambaroff is accompanied in his journey to London by his wife, a talented writer, who contributes extensively to the Russian official Tiflis newspaper *Kavkas* and a variety of other Russian and Armenian publications. She is an admirable assistant to her husband, helping him in his researches at the Patent Office and British Museum, and possessing a wide knowledge of petroleum. It has been a pleasant and interesting task taking them about the metropolis and looking at the sights from a Russo-Armenian standpoint. Recent events have forced the Armenian race upon the attention of Europe. The ill-treatment of the Armenians in Asia Minor by the Turks is becoming more and more an international scandal. It is not agreeable for Englishmen, who are politically interested in keeping the Russians out of the Tigris and Euphrates uplands, to compare the position of the Russian-Amenians with those under Tukish rule. Gulishambaroff is an illustration of the career Russia throws open for her Armenians, and the benefit she derives from the policy. While the Armenians of Asia Minor are a weakness to Turkey, on account of their discontent, those of the Caucasus are a source of strength to Russia, owing to their increasing numbers, their administrative capacity, and their loyalty to the White Tzar's interests.

Gulishambaroff is in the prime of life, being still under 40. He describes as preposterous the report that the wells of Baku are drying up. On his return to St. Petersburg he is to take part in deliberations at the Ministry of Finance with regard to a proposed tax on exported kerosine, on which he had to draw up and submit a report to the Russian Government before leaving Tiflis. At present the kerosine tax is only levied on oil consumed at home. If one be imposed on kerosine sent abroad the Russian Exchequer will doubtless benefit to the extent of £1,100,000, yearly by the revenue derived from oil. Such a sum is enough to make the mouth of every Indian economist water; for what Baku is handing over to Russia in revenue from oil, Burma might also pass on to India, if the industry were properly developed. And instead of any encouragement being given to Burma, that forlorn fragment of the empire is handed over to the German mercies of one learned in the lore of old fossils! Really, there are some things in which Russia sets England a good example. America and Russia have had to pay

heavily for their oil experience. Burma, last on the scene, is able to avail herself of their experience and develop the industry under conditions favorable for easy and successful effort. But Baku and Pennsylvania were both made by brains not by the rincings of wet blankets, and if Burma is to be rendered the Petrolia of the East, her oil industry must be built up by brains also. Neither capital run mad, nor the frivolity of bureaucratic infallibility, can replace that ill-appreciated yet indispensable article.

I WORK ON A SUNDAY.

LONDON, *October 25th, 1889.*

I HAVE just come back from a week in the North, where I have been delivering a couple of lectures to Newcastle audiences. One of these dealt with the Russian advance, the other with petroleum. Both were the outcome of a long article I wrote on Persia in the summer, which was published in the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* the day the Shah arrived at Newcastle. The Tyneside Sunday Lecture Society did not wait for a reply to the invitation to lecture there, but announced at once that I should lecture in October on "The Oil Wells of the World and the Wonders that spring from them." The Tyneside Geographical Society followed with the request to open the session with a lecture on the expansion of Russia. Had the invitations come from any other quarter, I should have probably sent a refusal, as I dislike lecturing. For years, however, my name has been before the public at Newcastle, and I have so many kind friends there, that I decided to swallow the bitters in the hope that the draught might be followed by a little pleasure. Accordingly I consented, October appearing at that time a long way off, and troubled no more about the matter until the invitations pouring in from Newcastle people, many absolute strangers, to stay with them during my visit, reminded me that the hour of torment was at hand. On Friday last the lamb had to present itself for sacrifice, and I may as well make a clean breast of it, and admit that the lamb travelled North in a funk. The very fact of so much kindness awaiting me, made it all the more incumbent that I should give a thoroughly good lecture, and I was by no means sure that this would occur. I think I have before observed that anybody can write a lecture and read it. I attach no credit at all to such a performance. In the calm and quietude of his study, a man can elaborate the choicest language and put forward his facts in the clearest, the most cogent, and the

most logical manner. If he is not in a mood one day, he can put it off to the next, or the day after, or the following week ; and in end turn out a finished production. But it is quite a different matter when he marches on the platform without a word of manuscript or notes, and talk for an hour or more before several thousand critics. If he is not in good form, he cannot put off the trial till the next day, or the day after, or the week after that—he must stick to his guns and do his best and show no signs of weakness before the enemy. Then, again, when a man has written out his lecture, it matters not whether he be in good form or not, because so long as he keeps his eyes on the rails as they travel over the paper and opens his mouth sufficiently wide he cannot will be overtaken by failure ; but a man who has no manuscript or notes must be ready for every emergency. If he gets into a no-thoroughfare of a sentence, he must back out gracefully. If he forgets a section of his discoruse, he must re-introduce it in a manner that will not mar the general plan. Should his vitality wane, and he feel a difficulty in keeping a firm grip on his subject, he cannot seek refuge in a manuscript but must peg away until his vigour returns again. On this account, extemporaneous lecturing is very hard work compared with reading a paper, and this is more the case if one have not constant practice. All the same, written lectures are so unpopular, and I dislike them so much myself, that I always lecture *ex tempore.* And it is because I realize so keenly, I suppose, the smallness of the step between success and failure in *ex tempore* lecturing, that I always funk the business when the time comes round, and I have to mount the scaffold. The only satisfactory set-off is, that I never carry the funk on to the platform—the feeling passes away the moment I face an audience. All the same, whether the lecture be good or bad depends entirely upon the mood I am in when I start the lecture. If I am below par, the lecture does not commonly obtain my own standard, and unless it does attain that standard, a whole ocean of praise will not remove the feeling of annoyance I feel afterwards.

The first lecture came off on Friday evening, and to illustrate the expansion of Russia from the earliest times, I had 22 lime-light slides, mostly maps. The chair was taken by the Sheriff of Newcastle in the place of the President of the Tyneside Geographical Society, Earl Percy, who was unable to be present. The audience was a good one, and wonderfully attentive. For an hour and ten minutes they listened with deep interest, and when I had done, many persons wished the lecture had been longer. I cannot say that I shared that view, feeling so tired towards the end that I was glad to see the appearance of the last map upon the curtain. This feeling caused me to be very dissatisfied with the performance, and I derived no consolation even when, the next morning, the *Newcastle Chronicle*

"boomed" me to an extent that made me positively blush, publishing a two column report of the lecture, my portrait, autograph, and biography, and two leading articles—one on the lecture I had given, and the other on the lecture I was to give on Sunday.

Of late years, Sunday lecturing has become an established institution in this country. Most of the large towns have Sunday lecture societies that start a session in October and close in May. As a rule, they are organized so as to simply clear expenses and no more. To those who are content with a morning at church, they furnish excellent recreation for the evening, and at any rate provide an escape from the awful monotony of many an English home on Sunday night that is better than the beer-shop. At Newcastle, the Sunday Lecture Society, which consists of some of the most influential men of the locality, holds its lectures in the Tyne Theatre—a building accommodating over 4,000 people. I lectured there during the war scare of 1885 when the place was crowded to overflowing. Long before the lecture was timed to begin on that occasion there was plenty of political feeling to account for the success, but, speaking generally, petroleum is not a highly popular topic, and the impression prevailed that the attendance would be of an ordinary character. This was a view I shared myself. When I went on the platform at seven o'clock, however, I found the house crammed from top to bottom, and over 4,000 faces turned towards the lecturer with an interest that was curious to watch, while the chairman, Dr Spence Watson, briefly announced the opening of the session.

For the sake of so many people, who had come to listen to what I had to say about oil, I was glad I gave them a good lecture. I had nearly 40 slides, which were well displayed on a huge sheet replacing the curtain, and from beginning to end I was conscious not only of having absolute command over the lecture, reeling it off without hitch or break, but also of having the interest of the entire audience at the end of my stick. It was a positive delight lecturing under such circumstances. The time fairly galloped. When I first looked at my watch three-quarters of an hour had flown, although I had only got to the tenth slide, and the basis of success having been laid, my only fear was that I might spoil it by excessive curtailment or by unduly extending the lecture. The usual limit is an hour and-a-quarter, and it is always considered extremely dangerous to go much beyond it. It is not simply that people get tired, but many have to go to catch trains, or carry on under more favourable circumstances that love-making which is the delight of the English youth on a Sunday evening, and the movement of these persons is apt to disturb an

audience and make it restless. Irrespective of these considerations it is better for a lecture to be five minutes too short than five minutes too long. It is better that the people should go away wishful for more, than that they should depart wearied. It so happened, however, that the two topics most interesting to Tyneside people—petroleum tank-steamers and liquid fuel—had been reserved to the end, and it was very difficult to compress what I had to say without disappointing many in the audience. When an hour and-a-half had passed, I watched with an anxious eye every movement in the audience, and piled on the interest while racing on the subject, until I closed at an hour and forty minutes with the audience as well in hand as at the opening of the lecture. To give a short lecture and to be told that the audience wished it longer is no compliment, but to exceed the limit by 25 minutes and to have persons trooping round complaining that one might have made it a little longer is the best reward a lecturer can have when he works on a Sunday evening. If I frankly say that I felt delighted when I stepped off the platform at a quarter to nine, it was not because the applause was so loud and the compliments so many, but because I had attained my standard for once, and was pleased at having enjoyed the good luck of giving a better lecture than usual to such a large and sympathetic audience. As showing how much a lecture is at the mercy of events, I may mention that whereas I had felt played-out on Friday long before the hour was up, I never experienced a moment of fatigue or strain the whole of the hour and forty minutes on Sunday, and could have gone on for another half hour with pleasure. Had the moods been the other way, the Friday audience would have had the good lecture, and the Sunday audience the indifferent one.

I have said that the Newcastle people are deeply interested in petroleum. For years I urged that England should start building tank-steamers to compete with the Swedes at Motala who were building every season twenty or more for Baku. In 1885, when I paid a visit to the Newcastle Exchange and was asked to address the merchants, I urged that if bulk transport was to become universal, Newcastle should endeavour to secure the monopoly of building tank-steamers for ocean traffic. The attempt in London to do this in a half-hearted sort of way by putting weak tanks in old steamers, I denounced, and insisted on new steamers being specially built for the trade, and built as good as, or better than, the steamers that were being made for Ludwig Nobel by Swedish firms. The following year, the keel of the first tank-steamer was laid at the Lord Walker Shipyard of Messrs. Sir William Armstrong, Mitchell and Company, since when, tank-steamers to the value of over £1,000,000 have been built on the

Tyne. To-day Newcastle is looked upon as the chief centre for tank-steamers, Sweden having been quite superseded, while my policy has been equally successful in other matters, the Russian orders for steamers for instance having been followed by orders for Manilla and steel rope for the wells of Baku. Even my ideas have suggested fresh trains of thought. For example, I met a Mr. Tennant who, after reading my *Region of the Eternal Fire,* arrived at the conclusion that the deep board bores common to Baku would do for salt as well as oil, and getting over from America some petroleum drillers, he successfully introduced into Durham the boring for salt on the oil system. It is not surprising, perhaps, therefore, that I should have received such a kind reception, for if, according to the old sages, a man is a benefactor who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before, it is only natural, possibly, that he should be popular if his writings bring in orders for forty oil steamers to a district which previously had been suffering from depression in the ship-building trade.

After pain, pleasure. During my stay in the North, I was fortunate in being the guest of Mr. Henry F. Swan, at North Jesmond—the prettiest part of Newcastle, and Mr. Sawn being one of the directors of Sir William Armstrong, Mitchell and Company, I was able to visit Elswick, Lord Walker, and other ship-yards and examine the industries of the Tyne district under circumstances which made the rest of the trip a joyous holiday. Evil usually cometh upon the man who works upon the Sabbath. In my case, I was punished with such jaunts and junkettings that the hospitality and kindness of North-country people have imparted a flavour to chill October that will pervade the whole winter.

ILE" IN INDIA.

LONDON, *May 1st, 1890.*

AT Burlington House last week an admirable lecture was delivered before the members of the Society of Chemical Industry by Mr. Boverton Redwood on "The Oil Fields of India." The Society of Chemical Industry is one of the most important of our scientific bodies. The president for the year is Sir Lowthian Bell, F. R. S., and the council includes such names as Forbes, Carpenter, James Dewar, Norman Tate, W. A. Tildon, Sir F. Abel and others of chemical fame. It has branches in different ports of the kingdom, and the proceedings of one and all are characterised by the seriousness and gravity that are usually supposed to

become persons of scientific training. For this reason, the lectures that are delivered and the papers that are read possess special weight, because no levity or Pickwickian trifling with science is permitted, and the audience applies a keen analysis of everything that is uttered or read, as remorseless as that which is usual with the members when making some calm, cold-blooded test in their own laboratories. Consequently when I was invited to attend Mr. Boverton Redwood's lecture on petroleum I knew beforehand I should listen to a good one, simply because the society would tolerate no other. At the same time I was equally aware that Mr. Redwood would have a deal to say that was original and fresh in regard to Indian petroleum. For years he has held the unique position of being practically our sole technical authority in petroleum matters. The son of the well known chemist Professor Redwood, Mr. Boverton Redwood, has had the advantage of a wide chemical training as well as a special grounding in petroleum. For many years he was the soul and life of the Petroleum Association, being its chemist and secretary, and coming into contact thereby with every conceivable branch and ramification of the petroleum industry; and when he left it to establish himself in a less fettered form on his own account, the Petroleum Association practically ceased to exist. It is no secret that he has been the petroleum adviser to the Nobels of Baku, the Standard Oil Company of America, the principal Galician oil refiners the Rangoon oil Refinery, and almost every oil firm in the United Kingdom. In conjunction with Sir Frederick Abel, he drew up some years ago, at the request of the Metropolitan Board of Works, special rules and regulations for rendering the storage and consumption of burning oils safe; and more recently he accompanied Colonel Majendie to the United States to assist in preparing a Petroleum Storage Bill for the Home Office. In the elaboration of this Bill he has taken a prominent part, and he has also, with Sir F. Abel, just presented a report which the Home Secretary had requested them jointly to draw up on the dangerous types of lamps in use. If I add that, in excess of several visits to the States, he has also personally examined the oil fields of Galicia and Baku, it will be seen that Mr. Redwood's knowledge of petroleum is singularly comprehensive—a fact which most persons will have already realised who have read the admirable cantor lectures he delivered before the Society of Arts two or three years ago.

The members of the Society of Chemical Industry usually meet and dine at the Hotel Previtali before a lecture, and thanks to this circumstance, I had a pleasant chat in advance with Mr. Redwood and Mr. Finlay, who were my neighbours. Mr. Finlay of Finlay, Fleming and Co. (The Burma Oil Company, Limited)

has done much to advance in a practical and solid manner the Burmese oil industry. Pioneering efforts of the kind he has conducted demand incessant energy, involve great expense and anxiety, and are not always so rapidly rewarded as they deserve. However, from what subsequently transpired at the lecture, the result of the American drilling introduced by the firm into Burma have been sufficently satisfactory to encourage them to persevere, and it is to be hoped that when the drill reaches the lower sands vigorous "gushers" will follow on their Yenangyoung property.

The space at my disposal does not allow me to draw largely upon the mass of interesting facts that Mr. Redwood placed before a crowded and appreciative audience. He had a good map to talk to, a fine collection of Indian oils, oil sands, oil products, and so forth, from the valuable General Petroleum Museum belonging to himself, and by the aid of these he rendered particularly interesting his reference to recent boring operations in Baluchistan, Assam and Upper Burma. With respect to the former he rightly pointed out that "apparently Indian petroleum exists in the greatest abundance in the Khatan oil field in Baluchistan, but the oil is not of satisfactory quality, even when regarded as liquid fuel, and the locality of production is comparatively inaccessible and the climate bad." Drilling there, as Mr. Townsend told him as well as myself when he was in London last year, is "extremely difficult owing to the disturbed character of the strata," while the oil is so heavy that "its density is practically identical with that of water, and it is in consequence freed with very great difficulty, from the water with which it is associated as it comes from the well. Even when the oil is warmed, the water does not readily subside. If an attempt be made to distil the oil containing water, the contents of the still froths up and passes over." The oil, in a word, is a sort of petroleum sludge, difficult to pump out of the boring, and hard to pass through pipes to reservoirs any distance off. Perhaps further explorations may reveal lighter oils in the locality. Meanwhile there are two facts to bear in mind: first, the fact, as Mr. Redwood stated it, that "petroleum may be obtained in Baluchistan in apparently immense quantities, is clearly shown by the yield of the wells;" and secondly, that the chemical researches of Mr. Redwood himself have recently resulted in the discovery, now the talk of the chemical world, whereby a copious yield of kerosine can be obtained from the heaviest and densest oils, even including the worst petroleums of India. From the Baluchistan oil sludge Mr. Redwood, in conjunction with Professer Dewar, Jacksonian Professor of Chemistry at the University of Cambridge, has succeeded by this new process in obtaining 40 per cent of kerosine of ·810 specific gravity.

If to be remembered for one moment that Baku refiners only get 30 per cent of kerosine from their Caspian "crude," the fact that the discovery of Mr. Redwood and Professor Dewar has rendered it possible to extract 40 per cent from Baluchistan petroleum, hitherto regarded useless as a lamp oil, imparts a special interest, both to that discovery and to the Baluchistan deposits, which, it is to be hoped, will not be lost sight of by the Press and the Government of India.

Mr. Redwood spoke very highly of the Baronga and Arakan deposits. The section of his lecture devoted to a detailed account of the oil industry there was deeply interesting, and made one feel the justice of his subsequent remarks in regard to Burma, when he urged that the development of the industry on the Irrawaddy should be conducted soberly and not by mere Stock Exchange speculators of the type that have recently made South African gold mines stink on the money market of London. There can be hardly a doubt that the ill-luck and misfortunes of the Baronga Oil Company have made the Arakan coast unpopular, and it will be some time before the feeling of mistrust engendered thereby passes away. The successful boring operations in Assam were also adverted to, as well as those of the Punjab, and then a most exhaustive account was given of the operations in Upper Burma.

In regard to these Mr. Redwood had to deal with Dr. Noetling's report, and while admitting his deductions to be of a "painstaking" character, he was compelled to condemn them as "misleading." No other opinion was hardly to be expected. "The deepest native well is 310 feet deep, but the majority do not exceed 250 feet—it follows, therefore that these wells drain but a small depth of oil-bearing sandstone." What lay below 310 feet Dr. Noetling had no data to furnish ; having no data, he was not in the position, therefore, to formulate any law as to what might or might not exist at 1,000 or 1,500 feet—the usual depths in India. Dr. Noetling having, however, acknowledged the error of his deductions in his subsequent letter to the *Pioneer*, there was no need for Mr. Redwood to demolish statements which Dr. Noetling had himself withdrawn. "As regards the future of the Yenangyoung oil fields Messrs. Finlay, Fleming and Company appear," said Mr. Redwood, "to entertain no doubt whatever of the existence of considerable quantities of petroleum, but their experience is that the yield per well is comparatively small and the cost of drilling very great. In this connection, however, it should be noticed that the wells yet drilled are of little depth, and that only what may be regarded as the first oil sand has been tapped. No one can say what may be found at greater depths, but it is at least possible that far more productive oil bearing strata may

be met with." Moreover, Messrs. Finlay, Fleming's wells are not broad-bore wells like those at Baku but of narrow diameter like those of America. If one of their seven wells has proved a dry hole, it should be remembered that even in America in 1888 there were 885 dry wells to 1,145 producing ones. Mr. Redwood very properly pointed out that the "actual results of drilling can alone remove the uncertainty at present existing. It by no means follows that the precise spots selected by the natives as giving readier access to the oil through the primitive methods of working available to them will prove to be the most productive ones when the drill is substituted for the spade. The Indian Government appear disposed to encourage competitive private enterprise, especially in the oil fields of Upper Burma, and so long as this principle is legitimately applied, no exception can be taken to it; but in the interests of the Empire it is to be hoped that the work of petroleum extoration and development will in no case be attempted without a full appreciation of all that it involves. It is in the highest degree important that this work should, for some time to come, be carried out under skilful, energetic, and above all, experienced management, and that ample means should be provided. On any other basis it is highly probable that much money would be wasted without obtaining satisfactory results, or even conclusive negative evidence; much disappointment and discouragement would ensue, and the development of the oil fields of India would be considerably retarded."

Mr. Redwood was warmly applauded at the close of his lecture, after which Professor Watson Smith, Mr. Finlay, and a number of others took part in a very interesting and complimentary discussion. I had hoped to escape joining in this, not being fond, as I have often said, of public speaking; but the lecturer had done his part so thoroughly in describing the actual condition of the oil-fields, that when the chairman called upon me to speak I felt bound to express my deep personal obligation to Mr. Redwood for the valuable and solid information I had derived from his lips during the evening. The interest whith which the many eminent chemists present had listened to the lecturer was kindly extended to myself, when I endeavoured to explain some of the chemical problems of Indian oils awaiting solution, and I shall not be surprised if Mr. Redwood's able address does not lead many of the listeners to devote their attention to the development of the Indian industry. *It was quite clear from the way they listened to him and clustered round him afterwards that he had awakened a new and keen interest in their minds.* And this is of extreme importance, because the oils of India being harder to manipulate than those of America, the chemist must work hand-in-hand with the Engineer to ensure success to the Indian petroleum industry.

[THE END.]

ADDENDUM.

CHARLES MARVIN

AND

CENTRAL ASIA.

CHARLES MARVIN AND CENTRAL ASIA.

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THE name of Charles Marvin must continue, during the present generation, to be as closely allied with Central Asia in the mind of the average Englishman, as is that of Stanley with Central Africa. It is true that Marvin can claim only to have familiarised his contemporaries with the wild tracts lying to the north of Afghanistan and India, whilst Stanley, before writing of the forests and the great lakes of Central Africa, first discovered them. But the general public do not make fine distinctions. Let the claims of Professor Vambery, Prince Krapotkine, Madme. de Novikoff, Mr. "E. B. Lanin," or the host of other writers who have delivered their souls upon the apparently inexhaustible topic of the Russian advance in Central Asia, be what they may, Charles Marvin has, in recent years, been recognised on all hands as the first authority on that and kindred subjects. The popular judgment was not, in my opinion, mistaken. In addition to a thorough knowledge of the Russian language and an intimate acquaintance with the conditions of life obtaining in the more remote districts owning Russian sway, he possessed a fine discrimination of character, a power of logical deduction from certain ascertained facts, and a keen appreciation of the results likely to arise from each fresh political complication, which are not often found concentrated in the same individuality. Marvin was, above all, a veritable Barnum, or Augustus Harris, in literature. He knew how to dress his communications so as to make them palatable: the *mise en scène* of his work betrayed the spirit of the stage manager. His books were timely and attractive, their titles well chosen, and their style couched in a vigorous English well calculated to draw a wide audience. It cannot be denied that he at times twanged the long-bow of the political alarmist. But he only exaggerated; the severest critic could never accuse him of wilful misrepresentation. It must be remembered that he wrote for a living, and when Russia and Afghanistan, General Ignatieff and Colonel Alikhanoff, had temporarily subsided into the mists of the deserts, whilst dynamite outrages and Whitechapel murders for the moment held the field, he could hardly be blamed for re-awakening

the vigilance of Englishmen, by telling them that Russia was at the gates of Herat, or that India was in danger. Apart from this tendency to paint in bold colours, Marvin was undoubtedly the greatest authority of his age and generation on the many and intricate questions connected with the opening-up by Russia of the vague territory described indefinitely as Central Asia. In these matters it is well to ask how others see us. When, therefore, we find the best of Continental and Trans-Atlantic opinion confirming this view of Marvin's position as a writer, we may rest assured that there is some substantial ground for the claim. The Vienna *Freie Presse* and the Berlin *Zeitung* gave him this pre-eminence; the New York *Tribune* took a similar view; whilst *La France Militaire* wrote:—"L'occupation rèconte de Merv par les Russes à provoqué en Angleterre, dans les journaux publiques et dans les Chambers, une agitation trés marquée, dont l'expression la mieux définie se traduit, à notre avis, par les écrits de M. Charles Marvin, le voyageur et l'écrivain, en ces questions de la plus undèniable compètence." The Russian press, in the face of the censor, have, as a rule, been discreetly silent on the merits of English criticism of Russian affairs, but most of Marvin's writings were very widely copied throughout the Czar's realms whenever their nature permitted it.

Charles Marvin's early training peculiarly fitted him for the important imperial, though non-official, rôle, which he was afterwards destined to fill in connection with the delicate relations between England and Russia on the Afghan frontier. At the age of sixteen he accompanied his father, when the latter was appointed to a position in Baird's great engineering works on the Neva. Here were constructed the engines of the famous but useless *Popoffkas* and the ironclad *Peter the Great*, a number of torpedo boats and river steamers, gun carriages for the army and navy, cartridges, and the thousand-and-one munitions of war turned out from such establishments. Mr. Marvin *père* came into contact at one time or another with most of the leading men in Russia; and naturally his observant and quick-witted son was not slow to improve upon the official acquaintanceship thus formed. Another incident, valuable to his future career, was the close relations which existed between him and the family of Colonel Volykoff, of the Imperial Cuirassiers of the Guard, who also had the honour to command the Empress's Body-guard. Colonel Volykoff's son and young Marvin were, *à la mode Russe*, educated together, and spent several years as student companions, either living in St. Petersburg, or on the family estates at Tamboff, or travelling about the country. In 1875, when 21 years of age, Marvin

came to London to earn a living in literature, and, of course, failed. So he took to copying for Government, and this haphazard choice of a means of livelihood determined the bent of his after life. It was whilst employed in the Treaty Department of the Foreign Office in May, 1878, that he came into possession of the famous Secret Treaty between Russia and England, the publication of which led to such an outbreak of indignation in England and caused exciting scenes in the Houses of Parliament. Marvin was not, I believe, guilty of an absolute breach of faith in giving the information to the *Globe*, but it was certainly an indiscretion, and he further erred in his unsparing denunciation of Lord Salisbury when the latter persisted in his denial of the accuracy of the summary published by the newspaper. The affair reflected credit upon neither Lord Salisbury nor Marvin, but it certainly gave the latter a decided impulse in the direction of writing upon Russia and the Russians. An ill-advised Government prosecution, which failed, caused Marvin to indulge in an equally ill-advised book, "Our Public Offices," which also failed. Having thus had the rough corners rubbed off by adversity, Marvin then really entered the literary arena, and volume succeeded volume, alternating with the well-known yellow pamphlets and letters to the newspapers, until he had advanced himself to the front rank of his profession. But my present purpose is not to write his biography. I have only given this brief sketch of his career to demonstrate his fitness for arriving at sound decisions upon matters of vital interest to Englishmen, and especially to Englishmen in India.

In 1880 I met Marvin at one of the well-known five o'clock teas given by Mr. Joseph Cowen, M. P., in the office of the *Newcastle Chronicle*. At these light but classic repasts every one in the North of England connected with literature or the press put in an appearance when in Newcastle; and, at that time, Marvin had just completed a series of most interesting and remarkable "interviews" with Russian political celebrities, to obtain which Mr. Cowen had specially commissioned him to go to Russia. The general conversation turned upon a remark made by General Annenkoff to the effect that the Afghan frontier dispute would never be properly settled until Russia and England had jointly constructed a good railway through Afghanistan. Lord Hartington, in a recent speech, had laughed at the project, and declared the Russian Military Engineer to be "a foolish fellow." "It is not," said Marvin, "General Annenkoff who is foolish, but the British public, in its childish treatment of Russia. What do Englishmen expect Russians to do? The necessities of the case compel them to constantly attack and bring into subjection the nomad tribes on their southern and south-eastern borders. We might

as well expect England to leave the Punjab alone as imagine that Russia can resist advancing along the Caucasus, or into the lands of the Tekke Turkomans. Englishmen cannot or will not understand this primary factor in Central Asian affairs. Russia is the only power there enthroned, and all the little places round about fly to her like needles to a magnet. Whether they like it or not, they go. Look here"—he went on, addressing those who were in his immediate circle, and placing his finger on a map of Asiatic Russia and the adjoining countries, which was affixed to the wall—"in a very few years there will be a line of railway across the desert from the Caspian to Merv, and then stretching upwards by Samarkhand and Bokhara to a junction with the Siberian Railway, which will follow the general direction of the great Military Road through Tomsk to Vladivostock. It simply remains to be seen how long the stupidity of Englishmen will prevent the formation of a branch line from Merv to the south, to join the Anglo-Indian line to Herat."

Now, at that time, I regret to say, I regarded Mr. Marvin as a visionary enthusiast, and this view was shared by many who heard him. But there was something so earnest in his manner, not usually so demonstrative as on this occasion, and there was such confidence in his tone, that the words were at once deeply impressed on my memory, and although I have no written notes of the conversation, the sentences I have quoted are practically *verbatim et literatim*, even to the exactitude of the slight verbal mistake which placed Samarkhand before Bokhara. He gave it then as his opinion that the railway he spoke of, and which was actually at that moment under consideration in St. Petersburg, would start on the eastern shore of the Caspian at Krasnovodsk, and turning south by the Naptha Hills, proceed *viâ* Chat, on the Atrek River, behind the Kopet Dag Mountains, to Shirvan and Chebishti, thence travelling east to Dooshak and Merv. By this route he deemed it possible to avoid most of the fearful desert traversed subsequently by General Annenkoff's railway battalions. The event of the next few months gave the first signs of fulfilment to this remarkable prophecy. The final Akhal Tekke expedition was undertaken by Skobeleff in the latter part of 1880, and, in January, 1881, Geok Tepe was carried by storm. To further the progress of stores and military equipment for the army, General Annenkoff constructed the first 146 miles of the line now known as the Transcaspian Railway, though, as a matter of fact, the rails were of little use for the actual purposes of the expedition, the first section to Kizil Arvat not being completed until December in the latter year. Marvin was proved to be right so far. It is true that the terminus of the line was fixed at Oozoon Ada, in place of Krasnovodsk, and the direct route across the desert was taken, thus

bringing the alignment further north than he expected; but the object was the same, namely, the nearest possible point to India. A curious verification of his belief in Krasnovodsk being the most suitable starting point on the Caspian for the line came to hand only a few months ago in the shape of Mr. George Dobson's book, "Russia's Railway Advance into Central Asia." Herein that undoubted authority on Russian affairs—he has been for many years the *Times* correspondent in St. Petersburg—says, after discussing the somewhat gigantic project for diverting the waters of the Amu Darya to the Caspian:—"A far more pressing question, about which there has been a good deal of discussion, is the advisability of transferring the starting-point of the Transcaspian Railway from Oozoon Ada to Krasnovodsk, on account of the deeper water and better accommodation for steamers at the latter place." This proposal has now been indefinitely shelved, owing to the great expense necessarily attendant upon such a change, but the fact that, after a lapse of nearly a decade, it is still thought worthy of debate, demonstrates Mr. Marvin's foresight in naming Krasnovodsk as the most suitable locality, long before the Russian punitive force had been formed to penetrate the Merv oasis. How far, in other respects, has his scheme remained unfulfilled? There is not a great deal wanting. The Transcaspian line is now 900 miles in length, and has reached Samarkhand; the latest telegraphic news from Russia shows that the next budget will contain provision for a Siberian railway and other lines, which I will mention later on, and even the Government of India have advanced their rails to Chaman, which is not so very far from Kandahar.

The development of railways in Central Asia—Russia to the east and south, England to the north—contains the germ of the final settlement—whether it be pacific or otherwise no man can tell—of the vexed questions which have haunted the past and present generations of Russian and English statesmen, and have engaged the constant attention of the military leaders of both countries. To this matter Marvin devoted himself continually. Every phase of railway enterprise in either direction found him constantly on the alert, and he was quick to observe the manner in which the new departure altered prior conditions. Thus, in July, 1888, whilst treating of Russia's constant progress towards India by rail, he wrote:—"If Russia asked England to extend the Indian system to Herat, this would be a frank avowal of her relinquishment of territorial designs on Afghanistan. Russia is not likely to do this, for once her railway communications with Meshed are complete, she will be able to render Herat difficult for either Amir or Viceroy to control, unless England wisely pushes on a

railway to Herat whilst Russia's hands are, to a certain extent, tied in Europe, and several links in the Moscow-Meshed line of communications remain incomplete." Here we have the key to Marvin's English policy for the treatment of the Central Asian difficulty. If an Indian line ran into Herat, our present trade disputes with the Amir of Afghanistan would disappear. There would be little use in the Kabul potentate levying a duty of £6 on each camel-load of goods passing through the Peshawar Pass, when the same articles could be conveyed to and from Kandahar, from Lahore or Quetta, for as many shillings or rupees.

In order that the far-reaching nature of the proposal to connect Calais and Calcutta by rail may be thoroughly realized, I purpose to go into the matter in some detail, though it is not possible in the space at command to do more than merely glance at the salient points. M. Ferdinand de Lesseps was the first man to place on paper a thoroughly practical scheme for the construction of the entire line. The total distance to be covered was 7,500 miles, and existing European lines would be utilized as far as Orenburg. From Orenburg to Samarkhand the rails would be laid by Russia, and from Samarkhand to Peshawar by England. The Russians, who knew Central Asia, and who were acquainted with the commercial and political advantages sure to accrue from the establishment of the railway, welcomed the idea with avidity; the English, who did not know Central Asia, and whose acquaintance with its trade capacities was very limited indeed, scouted it. Nevertheless M. de Lesseps went to work, formed the inevitable society in Paris, and finally despatched a party of French engineers to India to survey the ground from the English side. When they reached the Afghan frontier, they were politely, but firmly, told from Simla that they must go back, as Lord Granville was afraid that England might, by their action, become involved with the turbulent spirits across the border. By this magnificent exhibition of Fabian tactics, England has seemingly for ever lost her chance of gaining a really strong foothold in the great marts of Turkomania. Next came the Akhal Tekke campaigns, which caused General Annenkoff to throw his steel road across the desert, and, later, the Penjdeh incident, followed by the further progress of the line towards the Gate of India. The insurmountable difficulties which led that shrewd statesman, Lord Hartington, to term the Russian soldier engineer "a foolish fellow," vanished before the breath of the steam engine; and the wild desert, which was to have for ever engulfed rails, stations, rolling-stock, and telegraph wires, in one night's storm, has proved so far tractable that trains run now from Oozoon Ada

to Samarkhand with as much regularity as from Cannon Street to Charing Cross (I am afraid that the simile is not my own, and I cannot remember at the moment whether it should be credited to Marvin or some other writer, but it is forcibly true). But it is not the face of nature alone that has been conquered. Hear how a late traveller in that district, Mr. W. T. Stead, describes the task which Russia has accomplished:—"The opening of the Central Asian Railway took place on Sunday, May 27th, 1888, or, as the Russian calendar has it, on May 15th. It is a great feat, of which the Russians have good reason to be proud, whether regarded from the point of view of the statesman or the engineer. It seems but the other day that the tract of territory through which the railway passes was haunted by as fierce and untractable a set of man-stealers and murderers as ever plagued the world. For centuries the borderland between Persia and Turkistan had been the unhappy hunting-ground of wild tribes whose occupation was rapine, and who swept off the victims of their forays to be sold like cattle in the great slave mart of Merv. . . . . For a thousand miles right into the heart of the mysterious Central Asian regions, the Russian military engineer has thrust his wonder-working parallel rails; and it is possible at this moment to reach the tomb of Tamerlane, in the heart of Southern Tartary, nine days after leaving St. Petersburg."

Two years ago Marvin called general attention to certain conferences between the Russian Minister of Railways, Admiral Possiette, and the Governor of the Caucasus, Prince Dondukoff-Korsakoff, which evidently had for their object the extension of the Russian system into Persia and towards India. "In this country" (England), he wrote, "public apathy is complete. Since the death of Sir William Andrew, who advocated the Euphrates Railway for more than quarter of a century, no one has concerned himself any further about that route; and, in spite of occasional rumours, the projects of a railway through Asia Minor, from Constantinople to the Persian Gulf and India, have dropped almost entirely into the background." No such sluggishness or indifference was visible, he pointed out, in the actions of the Russian authorities. Three separate theses were presented to them for solution by the advocate of the Persian route:—*First*, how the connection between the Caucasus and Russia and the rest of Europe was to be shortened; *secondly*, how to extend the Russo-Caucasian system into Persia; and, *lastly*, how to bring about a junction of these lines with those in the north-west of India, and thus, says Marvin "defeat all rival attempts to tap the land traffic of the

East." It was not altogether patriotic or prudential motives which inspired the promoters of the Moscow-Tsaritzin-Meshed route. Jealousy of the immense success gained by, and Imperial favour shown to, General Annenkoff, partly accounted for their zeal. The Transcaspian, or, as it is more geographically convenient to call it, the Central Asian line, which attracted so much notice, was the creation of the Russian War Department, and the civil authorities had had nothing whatever to do with it. The interest which was wont to be centred in the Caucasus had been transferred to the other side of the Caspian, and something had to be done to recall the wandering affections of the Czar, whose passion seems to lie in the territorial aggrandisement of Russia. Owing to the passive position of England, no complete scheme could be formulated, but the rivil projectors were at full liberty to discuss their plans, the details of which Marvin speedily placed his fellow countrymen in possession of. With the Transcaspian route we are already familiar, but the alternative alignment requires the reproduction of Mr. Marvin's description, which, if my readers will only take the trouble to trace it out on a map,* will be soon recognised as the only actual land route between Calais and Calcutta, avoiding the shipment of passengers and goods across the Caspian Sea. It follows the line selected by Napoleon for his contemplated Franco-Russian invasion of India, and traverses the Caspian provinces of Persia and Khorassan. At present the railway system of Russia penetrates south as far as Vladikavkaz, at the foot of the Caucasus range, which Russia would have liked to tunnel long ago, but could not do so for want of means. To complete connection with the Transcaspian line, the railway is now being extended to Petrovsk on the western littoral of the Caspian. Here the Oozoon-Ada-Merv-Kandahar people would stop, but the Caucasian people say: "No; avoid the passage of the Caspian by carrying the line from Vladikavkaz to Tiflis, over the Caucasus by way of the Dariel Pass, and thus not only secure a land route without interruption, but also penetrate into a fertile country, and form a junction with the existing lines from Batoum and Poti on the Black Sea to Baku on the Caspian." Peter the Great is credited with many more things than his apocryphal will, which has always been a sort of Sybilline scroll to the Government of India, and, among others, he is said to have exclaimed, after the capture of Baku: "We have won the key of the Caspian. Yonder"—pointing towards Asterabad and Herat—"lies the road to India." The main line of the proposed railway need not run into Baku—and here I may incidentally note that,

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* See frontispiece.

in January of the present year, formal sanction was given in St. Petersburg for the construction of the Vladikavkaz-Tiflis section. It would probably proceed straight to Resht and Asterabad. The remainder of the run to Herat, *viâ* Meshed, would be pretty plain sailing, whilst an excellent agricultural and stock-growing country is traversed in Persia and Khorassan. Taking Oozoon Ada and Asterabad as two points equidistant from Moscow, on the opposing routes, and not forgetting that, before Oozoon Ada is reached, the Caspian must be crossed by steamer, the projects work out respectively as follows:—Oozoon Ada to Askabad, 300 miles; Askabad to Sarakhs, 200 miles; Sarakhs to Pul-i-khatun, 40 miles; Pul-i-khatun to Khombon, 76 miles; and Khombon to Herat, 113 miles: or a total of 729 miles. On the other hand, from Asterabad to Budjnurd is 182 miles; Budjnurd to Kutchan, 66 miles; Kutchan to Meshed, 93 miles; and Meshed to Herat, 223 miles: or a total of 564 miles. Marvin's latest views on the entire question may be summed up in a word. He did not believe that Russia will just yet attempt to push on any line through Afghanistan to India, but that she will devote her energies to "completing her own communications between Moscow and Merv, and establishing railway intercourse with Meshed."

When interviewed not long ago on the prospects of the Anglo-Russian Junction Railway, General Annenkoff said:—

"It all depends upon England, and the construction of a line through Kandahar to Herat. If that were done, I would undertake to deliver the reliefs, officers and men, for the Indian Army at Kandahar in nine days after leaving London." Of course the go-ahead General meant that he would perform this feat—which may occur some time when the lion lies down with the lamb—after the necessary links of rail on the Russian side are finished, and this, as I have already pointed out, is rapidly being done.

When it was observed that the cost of transit would render the relief of the British garrison in India, *viâ* Moscow and Central Asia, too expensive a luxury save in war time, when it might be impossible, he made this noteworthy reply:—"In that case your route would be the Canadian Pacific, or the Cape, not *viâ* Suez. But why should there be war. I am the best friend that England has, I assure you. Our interests in Central Asia are exactly the same, and the more business there is done the better. There is no opposition of interest between us; for we are so different. But we must partition Afghanistan. Of that there is no doubt. I had Captain Yate and Mr. Peacock staying with me at Tchardjui for some days, and we discussed the question thoroughly. We all came to the same conclusion. There is no other way out of it. You must take one part, and we will take the other,—by amicable arrangement, of course; a quarrel is

out of the question." I can well imagine Mr. Marvin regarding General Annenkoff as a man and a brother, had he heard him deliver those sentiments. That they meet Marvin's own views cannot be doubted, and had English statesmen been inclined to follow his advice, we should now have had a fairly firm grip on Bokhara and Samarkhand, so that Annenkoff's partition scheme would have been unnecessary. Marvin was ever and anon urging his countrymen to take more interest in the affairs of our Northern and North-Western Indian frontiers. One of the last public letters he wrote, dating only a few weeks before his death, pointed out the facilities offered by Baluchistan for British enterprise and British capital, which were being lavished in South America and elsewhere, but persistently withheld from the latest additions to the Indian Empire. Englishmen in these matters are slower than their neighbours, and, taking into consideration the fact that they are the best and most successful colonists the world has ever seen, it cannot be denied in some respects that the policy is a good one. Besides, it must not be forgotten that, although Russia has made great strides in Central Asia, she has only given a menagerie-training as yet to the human specimens of *feræ naturæ* she found there. The nomadic tribes, it is true, are beginning to settle down, and whilst the rank-and-file still live in their *kibitkas* or tents, the Khans have commenced to build brick houses for their own accommodation. The railways, and stations, and telegraph wires, with regular arrival and departure of trains, and frequent despatch of posts, all seem to point to civilization, but there is nothing behind all this. Women are still sold as articles of merchandise, and a very handsome wife can be bought for £150—rather a high price, some people might think. An excessive immorality prevails, which is only fostered by the Russians, and, to put it plainly, though the dominant race can govern well, they do not do much to humanize or improve those subject to their sway. The Hon. George N. Curzon. M. P., in his book on "Russia in Central Asia in 1889," thus forcibly describes Russian policy in the wide spheres of education, manners, religion, and morals:—"There seems to be altogether lacking that moral impulse which induces unselfish or Christian exertion on behalf of a subject people. Broad and statesman-like schemes for the material development of the country, for the amelioration of the condition of the natives, for their adaptation to a higher order of things, are either not entertained, or are crushed out of existence by the superior exigencies of a military *regime*. Barracks, ports, military roads, railway stations, post and telegraph offices, the necessary adjuncts of Government, abound ; but the institutions or buildings that bespeak a people's progress have yet to appear. Hence, while there may exist the tranquillity arising from peaceful and conciliatory combination,

there is not the harmony that can result only from final coalescence! Hence Englishmen have little need to fear contrast between Russian rule in Turkomania and British rule in India: the one is powerful on the surface, the other has not only the semblance but the reality of strength.

When the day comes that we do join the Russian rails at Kandahar, it will be wholly for our benefit in commercial progress. The richest marts of the East—Bokhara and Samarkhand—and the whole of the productive region lying away towards Mantchuria will be, to some extent, brought within our reach and there should be a golden future for British trade in that direction." Meanwhile we should not forget the advanced Russian view of the question, which Marvin constantly kept in the foreground. Shortly after the Penjdeh incident, a St. Petersburg paper put the following pertinent query:—"A couple more Penjdehs and Maiwands, and where would be British rule in India?"; whilst the *Neva*, a very popular non-political weekly illustrated paper, when publishing a series of sketches of the Central Asian Railway, headed them "On the Road to India." Marvin pithily put the situation into a few sentences: "In spite of all that has been written on the subject, few Englishmen have got as far yet as to expect that India will be joined to Europe by a railway in their lifetime. On the other hand, the Russians look upon it as simply a matter of two or three years. While the British public still mixes and muddles the vast steppes and deserts of Turkistan and the lofty passes of the Hindu Khush with the short routes and easy roads of the region between Merv and Quetta, the Russians thoroughly understand the insignificance of the Afghan barrier, and are convinced that, at no distant date, the overland trade of India must again traverse the Caspian on its way to Europe." But there is another disturbing element, in addition to the ever-present thought in the Russian's inmost breast, that some day he may be enabled to pounce upon India. On the Afghan frontier there are located in command several of the most able and ambitious officers in the Russian service. Foremost among these is Colonel Alikhanoff, who is the strongest and cleverest official in Transcaspia. He is fully persuaded that, by the aid of Persia and Afghanistan, he can make a future for himself, and it will not be his fault if the necessary disturbances in that direction are delayed to a period when they will be of little use to him.

The prolongation of the Russian line to Tiflis, and its certain future extension to Meshed along the route I have previously indicated, mean that Northern Persia has for ever passed under Russian influence. Why should not England, or rather the Government of India, take steps to secure Southern Persia for British trade? Foremost among many eminent writers, Marvin

has often directed England's gaze to Persia and the Karun river, the history of which must always be bound up with the records of Russia and England in Central Asia. Here there is a magnificent field for our commercial enterprise if we stir before it is too late, and nerve the Persians to rescue themselves and their fine country from the fate which they seem to regard as inevitable, that of becoming a Russian province. This, again, opens up a wide arena for argumentative comment, but I must now briefly deal with what I regard as the last phase of Marvin's connection with Central Asia, namely, the Great Siberian Railway.

Like the line to Samarkhand, which was speedily decided upon, the Czar did not take long to consider when the project of connecting European Russia with Viadivostock in Eastern Siberia was broached. Although it meant the construction of a railway 4,000 miles in length, and the expenditure of about 40 millions sterling, the Czar briefly wrote five years ago at the top of a despatch to his ministers, "Let a railway be built across Siberia—the shortest possible." But Russia is not rich, so she had to wait from 1886 until 1891 before any genuine attempt could be made to put the Czar's mandate into force. At present the Russian lines extend to Nijni Novgorod, famous for its fair, and thence the traveller goes by steamer down the River Volga and up the River Kama to the town of Perm. Joining the line again, a run is made across the Ural mountains through Ekaterinburg to Tiumin. From this point the great internal river navigation of Siberia begins, and steamers carry the traveller 1,800 miles further, to Tomsk, thus in a circuitous manner following the line of the *trakht*, or post road, the Via Dolorosa of modern years, along which so many thousand political convicts have passed to the hopelessness and void of Siberia. There is a southern route *viâ* Orenburg, but it is not much used.

The Great Russian Pacific Railway, however, will run about midway between these lines. The section from Samara, on the Volga, the starting-point, to Ufa in the Urals, has already been laid, and runs through a beautiful country. Marvin not long since indulged in a prophecy concerning this railway, in amplification of that which I heard him utter in Newcastle. He said:—"The absolute route throughout has not yet been decided upon in all its details, but the following are the points believed to be favourable—Ufa, Zlataoust, Tcheliab, Kurgan, the southern part of the Ishem district, Omsk, Tomsk, Lake Baikal (landing stage), the upper course of the Oldura or Ura, the Upper Amoor gold-fields, the middle part of the River Zey, Central Bureia, Little Khingan, Khabarovka on the Amoor, the Ussuri Valley, and Vladivostock." The official plans have not, so far as I am aware, been published, though Reuter recently telegraphed that the construction of the line would this

year be actually undertaken; but, when they do appear, it will be of much interest to note how far Marvin was correct in his forecast. He very aptly describes this line as "between St. Petersburg and Pekin." It is in fact designed to tap the inland trade of China on the one hand; whilst, on the other, it consolidates the Russian grip on the Pacific littoral. The year 1898 has been fixed upon by Marvin as the date which will see this last and greatest of Russia's works accomplished. And then—*nous verrons ce que nous verrons.* Russia and Canada will become near neighbours, and further complications may ensue. Marvin, however, gave it as his latest and most matured opinion that, in the lamentable event of a war between England and Russia, the real scene of action will be the Helmund, and it is to the progress of our "hereditary foe" in that direction that we should pay most attention. It is not within the scope of the present article to inquire what has been done, or is under contemplation, by the Government of India and the Home authorities to arm against the evil day, should it ever arrive, when the British and Muscovite armies will meet at the gates of Herat. Nor can I branch off into discussion of the great services rendered by the departed journalist to trade circles by his admirable judgment upon the mineral oil supplies of Canada, the Caspian, Burma, and Baluchistan. I have endeavoured to jot down, in a cursory manner, I fear, some few impressions of the great light thrown upon the erstwhile darkest portion of Asia by one who thoroughly understood the many problems he undertook to elucidate. Though only in the full vigour of manhood when stricken down, Marvin had already achieved much. He had toiled hard and disinterestedly, ever holding the advantage of England before his eyes, and a place cannot be denied him among the honoured list of Britons who have served their country well and faithfully.

LOUIS TRACY.

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